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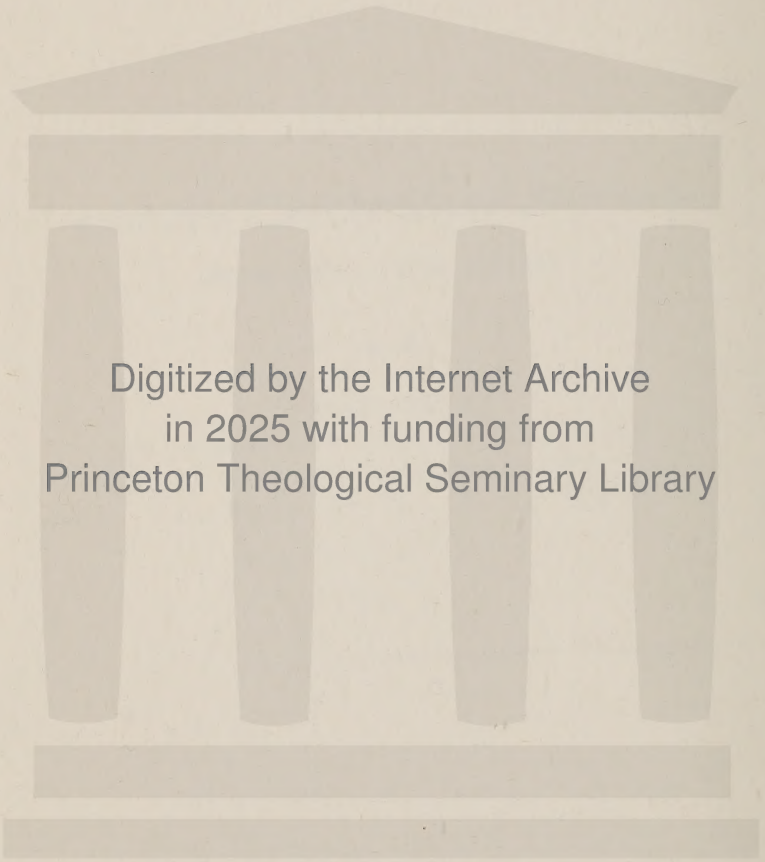
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*Skid Row in American Cities*

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# SKID ROW

## IN AMERICAN CITIES

By
DONALD J. BOGUE

COMMUNITY AND FAMILY STUDY CENTER
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

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*BOOKS AND MONOGRAPHS*

Ernest W. Burgess and Donald J. Bogue, editors
*Contributions to Urban Sociology*

Donald J. Bogue
*Skid Row in American Cities*

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## FOREWORD

Skid Row, according to the popular image, is a collection of human derelicts — generally "alcoholic bums" — in one place, and on one street.

Most people merely theorize that if you have enough people to make a city, inevitably some must go to the bottom, just as some go to the top. Therefore, these people say, if you break up Skid Row in one place, it will soon appear in another.

The outstanding value of Dr. Bogue's work is to show that actually Skid Row is made up of many types of people, and that the alcoholic derelicts constitute only a small group. For the vast number of men remaining, greatly differing major problems are presented. The one common denominator of all the men is that they are very poor — for the most part permanently poor and without resources.

Ordinary intelligence tells us that if it is proven (as Dr. Bogue's study has) that there are several distinct and entirely different groups on Skid Row, we should deal with each of them separately, and according to their needs, instead of shrugging off the whole problem as unsolvable. Moreover, it is obvious that one must deal simultaneously and adequately with each segment, if Skid Rows are to be eliminated, as they can be.

For example, the aged poor, many of whom do not even drink, must be provided with adequate minimum income to permit them to live elsewhere than in the sordid surroundings of Skid Row. At the other extreme, the "alcoholic derelict" (as distinguished from the curable drunkard) should be institutionalized if at all possible, at least long enough for his rehabilitation — he should not be allowed to destroy himself and to blight an entire neighborhood.

Lest there be those of soft heart and soft head who think that "institutionalizing" these derelicts is something inhuman, let me say that many of them are happier in institutions with a good program, where they have a chance and know it. These are not merely statements, but the result of my own experience with such men at Hart Island, New York, and the experience of others, such as the Yale University Center of Alcohol Studies.

## FOREWORD

It is a special value of Dr. Bogue's study that the facts about Skid Row are truly presented in a way that will enable us to deal effectively with the conditions. To do nothing is very expensive, because Skid Rows blight large areas far beyond their special geographical limitations. Moreover, these areas are generally adjacent to the valuable "core area" of cities and prevent their intelligent development.

Dr. Bogue's careful, documented, accurate, and most useful presentation should be widely read and should provide a basis for intelligent and long-overdue action to eradicate Skid Rows.

Raymond M. Hilliard, Director
Cook County (Chicago) Department of Public Aid

## PREFACE

This research was undertaken as an experiment to learn ways of making social science research more useful in the solution of modern social problems. The study was undertaken initially as a Demonstration Project for the Urban Renewal Administration, Housing and Home Finance Agency under Section 314 of the Housing Act of 1954. Two-thirds of the funds were contributed by the Urban Renewal Administration and the one-third required by law to come from local sources were kindly contributed by the Wieboldt Foundation of Chicago. Mr. D. E. Mackelmann, then in the city's Department of Planning, was Director of the project and assumed the responsibility for converting the research findings into an action program. The University of Chicago Social Science Division contracted to do the research, and assigned the project to the National Opinion Research Center, with the author as senior study director. Professors Clyde W. Hart (NORC) and Philip M. Hauser (Chicago Community Inventory) were designated as University representatives to sponsor the project. To guide the work, and to make use of the results as they emerged, a general advisory committee of representatives of public and private agencies within the city was established under the co-chairmanship of Mr. D. E. Mackelmann and Mr. Robert MacRae. A roster of this committee is reproduced below.

The present volume represents a more intensive sociological and psychological analysis of materials contained in the original interviews. It also contains a fuller exposition of some details that could not be included in the highly condensed planning report. The cost of preparing the present monograph was borne by a grant of funds from the Ford Foundation to the Social Science Division of the University of Chicago for a project entitled, "Problems of Living in the Metropolis," to be carried out jointly by the Social Science Division and the National Opinion Research Center. In 1961 the Community and Family Study Center became the Social Science Division's agent for completing this program, and the present report was prepared by this Center.

The photographs used in this study, with the exception of a few obtained from the Salvation Army, were taken by the author after the field work was completed. Several are of poor quality because they were

taken in poor lighting with high speed film, or are greatly magnified portions of small negatives. The objective is to help the reader to visualize the situation. No implication is intended that any particular person appearing in the photos is a permanent resident or necessarily afflicted with any one of the problems found in this area.

The 613 men who took us into their confidence believed that they were participating in a project that would usher in a new hope for all Skid Row residents. May their expectations speedily materialize! It has been impossible to maintain a cold scientific disinterest in the findings and their implications in the face of the discovery that so many American citizens still needlessly and almost heedlessly are being allowed to live under conditions which long ago disappeared from the rest of American cities.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Acknowledgments are due a great many people for aid in carrying out this research. The members of the Advisory Committee, whose names and affiliation are listed below, gave unselfishly of their time, despite the fact that all are important people and pressed with other work. Miss Selma Monsky, formerly field director of the National Opinion Research Center, courageously invaded the Skid Row environment to help test and pretest interviewing procedures, and did a masterful job of selecting and training a set of interviewers who could perform at the level of sensitivity desired. Jane Schusky was research assistant throughout the early phases of the project and did much of the interviewing and analysis of the data for resource persons. Elizabeth Bogue supervised the coding, helped plan the tabulation, and supervised the statistical computations. Hal Levy directed the tabulation. The report was typed for lithoprinting by Rheta DeVries, Basia Miller, and Annice Cottrell. The book was composed by Mary Booth, assisted by Ruth Neisser. Almost all of the work, including the interviewing, was performed by student research trainees.

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# Part I

## SKID ROW
## AS IT IS TODAY

*Chapter 1*

# *THE SKID ROW NEIGHBORHOODS IN AMERICAN CITIES*

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The term "Skid Row" (in the West it is called "Skid Road") has come to denote a district in the city where there is a concentration of substandard hotels and rooming houses charging very low rates and catering primarily to men with low incomes. These hotels are intermingled with numerous taverns, employment agencies offering jobs as unskilled laborers, restaurants serving low-cost meals, pawnshops and secondhand stores, and missions that daily provide a free meal after the service. Perhaps there are also barber colleges, burlesque shows or night clubs with strip tease acts, pennyarcades, tattoo palaces, stores selling men's work clothing, bakeries selling stale bread, and unclaimed freight stores. Most frequently the Skid Row is located near the Central Business District and also near a factory district or major heavy transportation facilities such as a waterfront, freight yards, or a trucking and storage depot.

On some of the larger and older Skid Rows, the most common lodging places are hotels that have cubicles instead of rooms. A cubicle is a small enclosure (usually 5 by 7 feet) with partitions of sheet metal or thin plasterboard instead of walls. These partitions extend from six inches or so off the floor to a height of about 7 feet. The space above the cubicle is covered with chicken wire, to provide ventilation and to prevent thieves from climbing over the partitions. The open spaces at top and bottom permit air to circulate, and the cubicles can be heated cheaply with overhead radiators. The management can thus accommodate large numbers of guests in a small area and at extremely low out-of-pocket costs. Cubicle hotels may be converted from old warehouses or other roomy old buildings. Many of them occupy the floors above a store, factory, or other commercial establishment on the ground floor.

The occupants of these cubicle hotels often refer to their living quarters as "cages" or "cubes" and to the establishment as a "cage hotel" or "flophouse." In 1960, the price of a "flop" (night's lodging) in a Chicago cubicle hotel was from 60 to 90 cents, depending on the size and location of the cubicle in the hotel, the physical condition of

the hotel, lobby facilities, and the pricing policy of the management. All cubicle hotels on Skid Rows offer weekly rates from $3.50 to $5.50.

Traditionally, Skid Rows have been primarily communities of men; women (some of them cheap prostitutes) are found only in a few of the rooming houses, in apartments or single rooms over business structures, in the taverns as "B-girls," and in a few hotels where men guests can come and go freely at all hours and where couples are accepted without expecting them to be traveling with luggage.

Several types of men reside in these unique areas. Before the present study was undertaken, the popular conception of Skid Row seems to have been that it is primarily a labor pool of readily available and migratory unskilled manpower and a community of chronic alcoholics. Closer scrutiny shows that among the Skid Row population there are also extraordinarily large proportions of:

Physically disabled men living on public assistance
Elderly men living on public assistance or on small pensions
Destitute men without work and without funds
"Bums" and "mission stiffs" — men physically capable of working but who prefer to live off missions

Three conditions which Skid Row men share, and which serve to distinguish them from residents of other communities in the city are:

a. They are homeless. — Most of them live outside private households and have no family life.
b. They are poor. — Many work only very irregularly and receive low rates of pay. For these reasons, they are at the bottom of the income scale.
c. They have acute personal problems. — With respect to society at large and in their interpersonal relations, many are poorly adjusted. This maladjustment frequently finds expression in heavy daily drinking, and in withdrawal from conventional family living.

It would be incorrect to contend that every inhabitant of these areas possesses all three of these characteristics, just as it would be incorrect to contend that all residents of other areas have none of these traits. But these three conditions seem to afflict simultaneously a higher percentage of persons in this neighborhood of the city than in any other. Thus, Skid Row may be identified not only in terms of the kinds of hotels, taverns, and other facilities found there, but also in terms of the kinds of people who live there and the unique type of social environment built upon this common social denominator.

Residents of Skid Row are the most poorly housed group in the urban population. The "normal" population would refuse to live in the housing occupied by these men. Here the incidence of disease, neglect, and cruel living conditions is far higher than in almost any other district

IN CHICAGO, SKID ROW ADJOINS THE CENTRAL BUSINESS DISTRICT. THE WEST MADISON STREET SKID ROW STARTS AT THE NORTHWESTERN RAILROAD STATION

A TYPICAL SKID ROW FRONTAGE: TAVERNS ALTERNATED WITH HOTELS AND CHEAP RESTAURANTS

of our large cities. This situation is due to a combination of circumstances, most of which exist because the community at large appears to have little sympathy or feeling of responsibility for these residents. Because it represents urban living at its worst, city planners, welfare workers, housing experts, and urban renewal administrators have realized they cannot ignore the Skid Row in their city, but must consider doing something to remove it. Not only is Skid Row a physical eyesore, it is also sociologically poisonous to neighborhoods in a broad surrounding zone. The task of planning for the redevelopment of such areas is especially difficult, however. On the one hand, the condition to be remedied is more acute, more complex, and beset with more problem situations than in most other neighborhoods undergoing urban renewal. On the other hand, less is known about these areas, and the people who live in them, than is the case for most of the other communities of our cities. Because a high proportion of the residents are problem citizens, they may be expected to react differently to urban renewal activities from normal citizens living in private households. Persons designing urban renewal programs may expect to find little support or cooperation from a large share of the Skid Row population. Many of the positive factors necessary to accomplish organized community living are lacking. Under these conditions, redevelopment procedures that are effective elsewhere may be completely ineffective here, and may accomplish little toward raising the level of life of the residents. In fact, many city planners fear that if they demolish the Skid Row in their city without taking other appropriate action in behalf of the homeless men residents they may accomplish little more than to cause the Skid Row community to move to a new location within the city, or perhaps to scatter its residents through several adjoining neighborhoods that are loath to receive them.

This monograph reports the findings of a research project that was undertaken with the intent (a) to supply much of the information and principles necessary to redevelop successfully Skid Row neighborhoods, and (b) to obtain basic sociological knowledge about the Skid Row community and its residents in an attempt to add to or refine theories about personal and social disorganization and social problems in urban areas. Appendix A describes in rather full detail the research design and sampling plan, together with other methodological details of the study. The research technician may wish to read this statement before continuing, for the main body of the report has been written in such a way that the findings and their implications are discussed with a minimum of procedural distractions.

## A GENERAL LOOK AT SKID ROW NEIGHBORHOODS IN 41 AMERICAN CITIES

Early in the planning of this study, letters were addressed to responsible officials in all cities in the 48 States having 50,000 or more population, inquiring whether a Skid Row were present in that city and, if so, where it is located.[1] In response to these inquiries, and as a result of other explorations, Skid Row developments were reported or inferred for about 45 cities. The locations of the Skid Row neighborhoods in each city were plotted on maps. At the end of this chapter will be found a set of maps indicating the location of Skid Rows in the nation's leading cities where a Skid Row area could be identified. The Bureau of the Census had prepared statistics of population and housing for census tracts in 41 of these cities. The census tracts in which the Skid Row communities lie were identified, and the data for these tracts were analyzed to determine in what ways they differ from the city as a whole. Where possible, these indexes were calculated for both 1950 and 1940, in order to compare the amount of change in Skid Row with the amount of change in the entire city.

From these 41 sets of data, we will try to abstract a generalized picture of what Skid Rows are like. This is facilitated by constructing a typical Skid Row, which is simply an arithmetic average of the indexes for the 41 places.[2]

Number of Homeless Men. — Only a very crude and impressionistic estimate of the number of low income homeless men living on Skid Rows can be made from available census data. Statistics for the total number of homeless people (including both men and women of all levels of income) can be derived by computing from published data for census tracts the number of civilian persons living outside regular households but not in institutions. This yields a count of the number of persons who live more or less permanently in hotels or large rooming houses (places that have 5 lodgers or more) irrespective of the price paid for accommodations. Such estimates are reported for each of the 41 cities in Table 1-1. These statistics are the only available evidence that might be used as a rough guide to indicate the size of Skid Rows, but they are highly approximate; information for individual cities can be quite misleading. As estimates of homeless men who live in Skid Row areas they are deficient on several counts:

a. The census tracts extend past the exact Skid Row neighborhoods.
b. Female as well as male lodgers of the entire area are included.
c. Hotel dwellers who live in better quality quarters and pay higher rates than do residents of Skid Row are also counted. In some instances, the census tracts which contain Skid Row neighbor-

Table 1-1. SELECTED POPULATION AND HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS OF CENSUS TRACTS CONTAINING SKID ROWS, 41 CITIES OF THE UNITED STATES, 1950

| City | Estimated number of homeless persons (000) (1) | Percentage point change in percent nonwhite (2) | Percent having 6 years or less of school | Percent unemployed | Percent earning less than $1,500 in 1949 | Percent of dwelling units substandard | Percent of dwelling units built before 1920 | Percent of dwelling units with 1.51 or more persons per room |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Average, Skid Row.. | 5.0 | 2.9 | 30.4 | 15.4 | 49.0 | 54.7 | 85.4 | 12.6 |
| Average city..... | ... | ... | 17.3 | 5.7 | 26.9 | 19.2 | 50.9 | 4.7 |
| Chicago..... | 20.8 | 12.6 | 30.3 | 16.6 | 43.8 | 77.6 | 94.8 | 29.8 |
| San Francisco..... | 18.5 | 4.6 | 28.9 | 30.3 | 58.1 | 45.5 | 90.2 | 8.3 |
| Los Angeles..... | 16.0 | 7.9 | 23.5 | 24.5 | 57.8 | 61.1 | 89.4 | 13.8 |
| Detroit..... | 13.0 | -2.6 | 32.7 | 13.4 | 44.9 | 47.8 | 83.6 | 13.0 |
| New York..... | 11.4 | ... | 42.8 | 15.6 | 43.9 | 32.6 | 90.9 | 6.3 |
| Seattle..... | 7.4 | 0.2 | 22.1 | 34.6 | 51.9 | 78.0 | 92.7 | 10.1 |
| Denver..... | 7.3 | 2.5 | 25.1 | 17.4 | 55.2 | 70.1 | 84.4 | 22.5 |
| Portland, Oregon... | 6.8 | -2.7 | 23.2 | 23.4 | 59.0 | 61.5 | 89.5 | 6.4 |
| Boston..... | 6.3 | 3.9 | 31.2 | 15.7 | 49.4 | 47.6 | 98.8 | 6.6 |
| Minneapolis..... | 6.1 | 0.7 | 26.7 | 24.1 | 60.4 | 52.4 | 97.6 | 9.0 |
| Milwaukee..... | 6.0 | 4.0 | 22.7 | 6.1 | 33.0 | 41.6 | 82.8 | 10.8 |
| Pittsburgh..... | 5.9 | 8.2 | 34.5 | 12.3 | 42.2 | 59.5 | 83.1 | 11.2 |
| Oakland..... | 5.8 | 23.9 | 32.0 | 23.5 | 43.7 | 45.9 | 80.0 | 12.6 |
| Sacramento..... | 5.4 | ... | 33.7 | 32.8 | 58.1 | 51.7 | 86.8 | 15.0 |
| Cincinnati..... | 5.4 | -3.2 | 37.3 | 12.9 | 48.4 | 83.4 | 96.4 | 20.3 |
| St. Louis..... | 4.6 | -3.9 | 27.1 | 14.7 | 56.1 | 87.8 | 96.9 | 27.8 |
| Buffalo..... | 4.2 | 13.6 | 38.3 | 27.3 | 55.3 | 44.5 | 92.6 | 4.7 |
| Omaha..... | 4.1 | ... | 18.3 | 7.1 | 43.2 | 50.9 | 83.1 | 11.6 |
| Houston..... | 3.8 | 1.6 | 19.7 | 8.3 | 46.5 | 50.3 | 69.1 | 14.8 |
| Philadelphia..... | 3.7 | 8.5 | 38.8 | 22.6 | 65.9 | 59.2 | 99.1 | 13.8 |
| Oklahoma City..... | 2.9 | 2.0 | 29.3 | 7.2 | 52.4 | 67.9 | 70.3 | 17.2 |
| Providence..... | 2.9 | 6.9 | 24.9 | 15.1 | 39.5 | 36.0 | 96.2 | 4.3 |
| Fort Worth..... | 2.9 | ... | 26.1 | 6.7 | 50.6 | 62.3 | 55.8 | 17.2 |
| Baltimore..... | 2.9 | 7.5 | 55.4 | 13.9 | 52.0 | 60.2 | 87.7 | 11.3 |
| Toledo..... | 2.8 | -2.8 | 26.1 | 16.8 | 37.7 | 48.5 | 94.4 | 8.3 |
| Akron..... | 2.7 | 7.6 | 23.1 | 11.9 | 30.8 | 33.2 | 77.6 | 4.7 |
| Indianapolis..... | 2.5 | 2.6 | 20.1 | 5.6 | 37.1 | 50.6 | 83.7 | 12.3 |
| Cleveland..... | 2.4 | -6.6 | 25.7 | 8.3 | 28.5 | 20.2 | 96.0 | 2.4 |
| New Orleans..... | 2.2 | -5.3 | 31.4 | 11.4 | 45.8 | 31.3 | 97.2 | 8.3 |
| Syracuse..... | 2.1 | 7.8 | 25.7 | 13.6 | 46.3 | 31.6 | 68.3 | 3.8 |
| Columbus, Ohio..... | 2.1 | 2.1 | 25.5 | 10.1 | 38.7 | 57.0 | 75.4 | 13.1 |
| Kansas City..... | 2.0 | -2.9 | 30.0 | 13.0 | 60.7 | 78.8 | 89.7 | 32.9 |
| Birmingham..... | 1.8 | -8.9 | 37.6 | 8.1 | 45.7 | 48.7 | 28.4 | 15.8 |
| Richmond, Va..... | 1.7 | 4.6 | 42.9 | 11.4 | 61.9 | 62.6 | 87.2 | 15.3 |
| Tacoma..... | 1.5 | ... | 19.7 | 15.9 | 45.8 | 66.0 | 76.8 | 6.3 |
| Norfolk..... | 1.5 | ... | 49.0 | 14.0 | 54.5 | 58.7 | 92.3 | 14.8 |
| Chattanooga..... | 1.2 | ... | 54.3 | 8.3 | 56.7 | 77.6 | 72.6 | 19.9 |
| San Jose..... | 0.8 | ... | 26.2 | 16.5 | 43.4 | 16.5 | 73.9 | 3.4 |
| Nashville..... | 0.8 | 0.5 | 31.3 | 4.4 | 56.9 | 80.7 | 95.0 | 20.2 |
| Rochester..... | 0.8 | 2.9 | 25.0 | 20.6 | 64.2 | 53.3 | 100.0 | 4.9 |
| St. Paul..... | 0.7 | -0.1 | 28.1 | 14.5 | 44.4 | 51.3 | 99.3 | 10.7 |

[1] Includes all civilian persons of both sexes living outside regular households but not in institutions, irrespective of income.

[2] Represents the change in percent nonwhite, 1940-50, for Central City subtracted from the change in percent nonwhite, 1940-50, of Skid Row tracts. Data available for only 34 cities.

hoods also include some of the best of the downtown hotels. Persons enumerated by the census as permanent residents of these hotels are included in the estimate of homeless persons.

THIS IS THE LARGEST OF CHICAGO'S FIREPROOF CUBICLE HOTELS. IT BOASTS 1000 ROOMS

ANOTHER EXAMPLE OF SKID ROW FRONTAGE: THE PAWN SHOP

d. The census enumeration of the Skid Row neighborhoods may be very incomplete.

For a few cities for which direct estimates of Skid Row population are available, it appears that the number of Skid Row homeless men is roughly one-half the total number of homeless persons reported for tracts containing Skid Rows. If this is used as a very crude guide, the estimated number of homeless men in the Skid Rows of the 41 cities in 1950 would be very nearly 100,000.

Table 1-1 lists the 41 cities in descending order according to the estimated number of homeless persons in their Skid Row census tracts. In reading this table, please remember that for each city, the actual number of homeless men very probably is much smaller than the estimate reported. The cities containing the major Skid Rows appear to be Chicago, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Detroit, and New York City. In each of these cities, the number of homeless men probably exceeds 5,000 or 6,000.

Perhaps the really impressive aspect of Table 1-1 is the large number of cities that appear to have a medium-size Skid Row, probably between 500 and 2,000 homeless men. On the basis of the rather skimpy evidence of this table, it may not be exaggerating the facts to conclude that almost all of the 100 largest cities contain an identifiable Skid Row type of neighborhood with at least 250 homeless men, and that most have a homeless man population much larger than this.

The concentration of men seems to be greater at major port cities, major railroad centers, and manufacturing, lumbering, or mining towns that require large quantities of manual labor, and near regions where migratory laborers help to harvest the crops.

Sex Composition. — As would be expected, most census tracts containing Skid Rows exhibit a preponderance of males. The average sex ratio (males per 100 females) for such tracts in all 41 cities was 172 in 1950, while the corresponding ratio for the cities as a whole was only 94. A rise in the sex ratio of Skid Row tracts between 1940 and 1950 should indicate either that a Skid Row is growing in size (perhaps by displacing other population) or that the neighboring population within the same tracts is moving out. Between 1940 and 1950 the Skid Row census tracts of the following cities experienced a large increase in their sex ratio:

| | |
|---|---|
| Houston | Portland, Oregon |
| Minneapolis | Richmond, Virginia |
| Nashville | Seattle |

Whether this is due to the emergence of larger and new Skid Rows or to the demolition or clearance of family-occupied slum structures in the Skid Row tracts cannot be determined.

Conversely, a sharp decline in the sex ratio of Skid Row tracts from one census to another (indicating an increase in the proportion of females) suggests that the homeless man population of the Skid Row neighborhood is declining or that it is being invaded by families. Sex ratios declined sharply between 1940 and 1950 in the Skid Row census tracts of the following cities:

Buffalo
Chicago
Kansas City
Los Angeles
Philadelphia
St. Louis
St. Paul
San Francisco
Rochester

From information concerning race composition, presented below, it appears that these cities were being invaded by Negro in-migrant families, and the falling sex ratios were due primarily to this factor, although there may also have been a shrinking of the Skid Row area, which had become quite populous during the depression years.

Race and Nativity Composition. — The census tracts in which Skid Rows lie had above-average proportions of foreign born population, in comparison with the city as a whole. Also, they were being invaded by Negroes at a faster rate than the city. These facts may be observed from Table 1-2. The Skid Row neighborhoods appear to have developed originally and thrived in census tracts that contained large numbers of foreign born population. This is evident from the high proportion of foreign born for 1940. As this foreign born population declines (because of restrictions upon immigration), it is being replaced by Negroes, low-income southern whites, and (in some cities) by Puerto Ricans.

Not all Skid Row neighborhoods were being invaded as fast as the rest of the city. In some cities, especially in the South, the balance of the city underwent a greater change in color composition than Skid Row areas. Negro invasion took place primarily in the Skid Rows of the

Table 1-2. NATIVITY AND RACE COMPOSITION OF SKID ROW CENSUS TRACTS IN SELECTED AMERICAN CITIES IN COMPARISON WITH THE CITY AS A WHOLE, 1940 AND 1950

| Nativity and race composition | Average of Skid Row tracts | Average for cities |
|---|---|---|
| NATIVITY: | | |
| Percent foreign born, 1950..... | 10.1 | 7.9 |
| Percent foreign born, 1940..... | 15.6 | 11.2 |
| Average change per city, 1940-1950... | -5.1 | -2.7 |
| RACE: | | |
| Percent nonwhite, 1950..... | 22.1 | 13.7 |
| Percent nonwhite, 1940..... | 16.3 | 11.4 |
| Average change per city, 1940-1950... | 5.7 | 2.7 |

large industrial cities of the Northeast and the major cities of the Pacific Coast.

Age Composition. — In comparison with the city, the Skid Row tracts had concentrations of older persons, with a deficit of children and young adults, and this difference increased between 1940 and 1950. The proportion of persons 65 and over was about 35 percent greater in the Skid Row census tracts than in the cities which contained them. About one person in nine in the average Skid Row tracts was aged 65 and over, in 1950; in the average cities the ratio was one in twelve.

Socio-economic differences. — In comparison with the cities that contain them, Skid Row tracts have larger proportions of (a) poorly educated, (b) low income, (c) unemployed persons or (d) persons employed as laborers. The data of Table 1-3 illustrate these facts. From the very large size of these differences there can be little question that these conditions affect not only Skid Row but the other parts of the census tracts which contain Skid Rows.

Table 1-3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF SKID ROW CENSUS TRACTS IN COMPARISON WITH THE CITY AS A WHOLE, SELECTED AMERICAN CITIES, 1950

| Socio-economic item | Average of Skid Row tracts | Average for cities |
|---|---|---|
| Percent having 6 years or less of schooling... | 30.3 | 17.3 |
| Percent of labor force unemployed..... | 14.7 | 5.7 |
| Percent in laborer occupations..... | 12.7 | 6.3 |
| Percent earning less than $1,500 in 1949..... | 48.7 | 26.9 |

Housing Conditions. — As has been indicated, in the Skid Row census tracts a high proportion of persons do not live in private households, but in hotels and rooming houses. Among the population that does occupy private dwelling units, a very high proportion are renters rather than owners. A preponderant share of the private dwelling units are substandard (located in a dilapidated structure and without a private bath), located in old structures, and occupied at extraordinarily high densities. Also, vacancy rates are higher here than elsewhere in the city. The housing statistics of Table 1-4 illustrate these facts. It is important to realize that these housing statistics do not refer to the residences of homeless men, except as these men are lodgers in private households, because hotels are excluded from the Census of Housing. These data demonstrate that a large percentage of the families who live in the census tracts which also contain Skid Rows occupy old, substandard, and overcrowded quarters. The typical Skid Row is situated in a slum district, frequently where residences are intermingled with factories, warehouses, freight yards, and other nonresidential land uses.

TYPICAL STREET SCENE IN FRONT OF TWO OF THE LARGE CUBICLE HOTELS

A LEADING SKID ROW BAR, WITH HOTEL ABOVE. PAINT IS PEELED FROM FIRE SEVERAL YEARS AGO

A TYPICAL SKID ROW ROOMING HOUSE WHICH ONCE WAS A MANSION

JUST OFF SKID ROW ARE WAREHOUSES, FACTORIES, AND WHOLESALE ESTABLISHMENTS

Table 1-4. HOUSING CHARACTERISTICS OF SKID ROW CENSUS TRACTS IN COMPARISON WITH THE CITY AS A WHOLE, SELECTED AMERICAN CITIES, 1950

| Housing item | Average of Skid Row tracts | Average for cities |
|---|---|---|
| Percent living outside private households.... | 35.3 | 5.3 |
| Percent of dwelling units substandard..... | 54.2 | 19.2 |
| Percent of dwelling units with 1.51 or more persons per room..... | 13.0 | 4.7 |
| Percent of structures built before 1920..... | 83.8 | 50.9 |
| Percent of dwelling units owner-occupied..... | 12.1 | 45.9 |
| Percent of dwelling units vacant..... | 2.4 | 1.6 |

Population Growth. — Between 1940 and 1950, the tracts containing Skid Rows increased by an average of only 2.9 percent, while the cities containing these areas grew by 15.0 percent. This indicates that the population of most Skid Row areas was not growing. However, since the Skid Row is only a part of these tracts it cannot be claimed with certainty that the size of the Skid Row did not grow during this decade. It is known that during the economic depression, 1930-1938, the Skid Row areas became a haven for many unemployed men, and that during these years the Skid Row population reached unprecedentedly large numbers. But the rise in employment in the late 1930's caused much of this idle manpower living on public assistance in Skid Row shelters to be absorbed. Whether the process was completed by the time the 1940 census was enumerated is not known. Other things being equal, one would have expected a decline in Skid Row population between 1940 and 1950, just because of the wartime manpower shortage. The fact that the total population of the census tracts containing these areas did not grow very much between 1940 and 1950, even though these tracts were being invaded by Negro, Southern white, and Puerto Rican families, suggests (but does not prove) that the number of homeless men living on Skid Rows may have declined somewhat.

## CENSUS MATERIALS FOR CHICAGO'S SKID ROW

In order to take a closer look at the population characteristics of Skid Row homeless men, the U.S. Bureau of the Census was asked to retabulate, at the expense of this study, its records for a list of addresses for cubicle hotels and rooming houses for men in Chicago's Skid Row areas. A 20 percent sample of 9,095 persons enumerated in these places in 1950 was tabulated. These data were then compared with the same items of information for the city of Chicago as a whole. Table 1-5 summarizes the results, and shows the outstanding differences between Chicago City and Chicago's Skid Row.

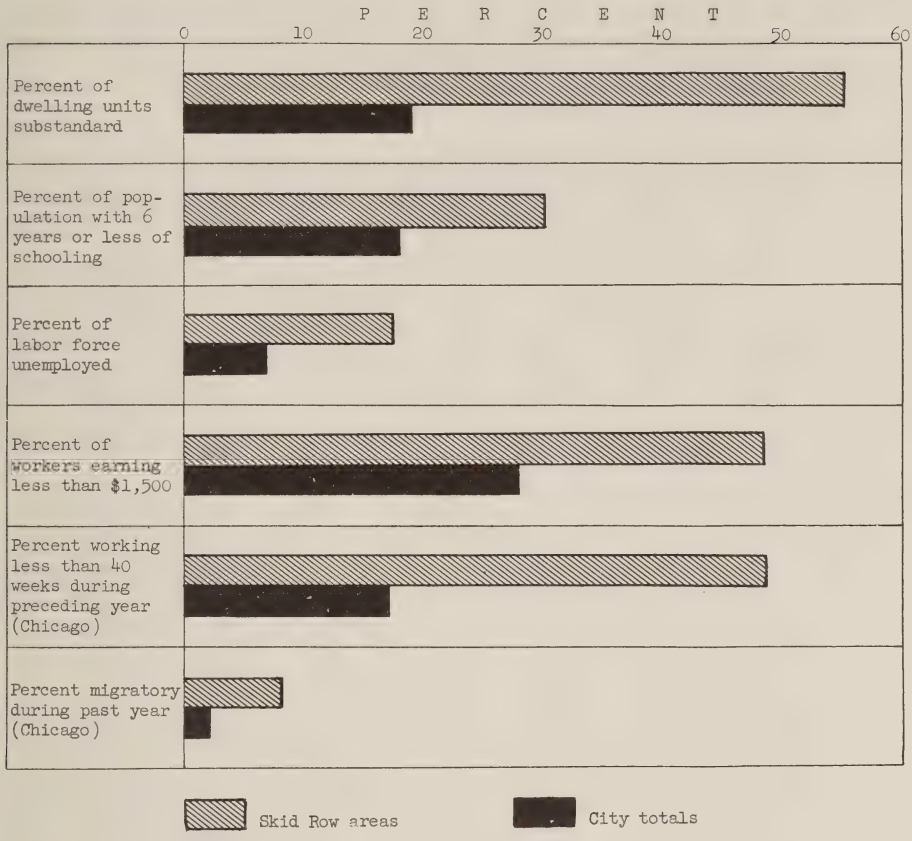



Figure 1-1. A COMPARISON OF SKID ROWS AND HOMELESS MEN WITH THE TOTAL CITIES WHICH CONTAIN THEM: 41 CITIES, 1950 CENSUS

In comparison with the adult population of the city of Chicago as a whole, the materials of Table 1-5 show that an unusually high proportion of Skid Row men are:

a. Foreign born white or "other nonwhite" race (American Indian).
b. Single, widowed, or divorced: half have never married.
c. Middle-aged or older men, concentrated in the ages of 45-74.
d. Very poorly educated, with more than one-fifth being "functionally illiterate" (having completed fewer than 5 years of elementary school).
e. Unemployed. The unemployment rate among the Skid Row men was more than eight times that of the general population.
f. Not in the labor force, with "unable to work" as the primary reason.
g. Employed as wage or salary workers.

h. Of extremely low income, with almost one-half living on less than $90 per month. Almost one-fourth of the men had received less than $500 in cash during the preceding year.

Table 1-5. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHICAGO'S SKID ROW POPULATION IN COMPARISON WITH THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO'S POPULATION, 1950

| Characteristic | Percent distribution | | Difference from city |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Skid Row | Chicago | |
| Population, total | 100.0 | 100.0 | ... |
| Male | 96.3 | 49.1 | 47.2 |
| Female | 3.7 | 50.9 | -47.2 |
| Race and nativity, total | 100.0 | 100.0 | ... |
| White, total | 96.4 | 86.2 | 10.2 |
| Native born | 72.7 | 70.9 | 1.8 |
| Foreign born | 23.7 | 15.3 | 8.4 |
| Nonwhite, total | 3.6 | 13.7 | -10.1 |
| Negro | 1.4 | 13.2 | -11.8 |
| Other | 2.1 | 0.6 | 1.5 |
| Marital status, total | 100.0 | 100.0 | ... |
| Single | 51.3 | 26.3 | 25.0 |
| Married | 14.6 | 64.1 | -49.5 |
| Separated | 9.4 | 2.4 | 7.0 |
| Divorced | 10.5 | 2.5 | 8.0 |
| Widowed | 14.2 | 4.7 | 9.5 |
| Age, total | 100.0 | 100.0 | ... |
| Under 20 years | 1.5 | 1.5 | ... |
| 20-24 years | 3.6 | 10.0 | -6.4 |
| 25-29 years | 3.8 | 12.0 | -8.2 |
| 30-34 years | 5.1 | 11.5 | -6.4 |
| 35-39 years | 6.0 | 11.2 | -5.2 |
| 40-44 years | 8.5 | 10.2 | -1.7 |
| 45-49 years | 13.5 | 9.6 | 3.9 |
| 50-54 years | 13.7 | 9.1 | 4.6 |
| 55-59 years | 13.2 | 8.2 | 5.0 |
| 60-64 years | 12.9 | 6.8 | 6.1 |
| 65-69 years | 9.5 | 4.7 | 4.8 |
| 70-74 years | 5.4 | 2.7 | 2.7 |
| 75 years and over | 3.1 | 2.4 | 0.7 |
| Years of school completed, total* | 100.0 | 100.0 | ... |
| None | 6.0 | 2.4 | 3.6 |
| Elementary: | | | |
| 1-4 years | 15.1 | 7.5 | 7.6 |
| 5-6 years | 14.2 | 7.4 | 6.8 |
| 7 years | 8.3 | 5.2 | 3.1 |
| 8 years | 25.4 | 24.0 | 1.4 |
| High school: | | | |
| 1-3 years | 15.0 | 17.7 | -2.7 |
| 4 years | 10.5 | 19.8 | -9.3 |
| College: | | | |
| 1-3 years | 4.2 | 8.3 | -4.1 |
| 4 years | 1.4 | 7.6 | -6.2 |
| Employment status, total* | 100.0 | 100.0 | ... |
| In the labor force, 14 years and over | 72.8 | 61.8 | -9.0 |
| Employed | 47.2 | 78.4 | -31.2 |
| Unemployed | 25.6 | 3.5 | 22.1 |
| Not in the labor force | 27.1 | 18.2 | 8.9 |
| Unable to work | 15.9 | 3.7 | 12.2 |
| Other | 11.2 | 14.5 | -3.3 |

Table 1-5. CHARACTERISTICS OF CHICAGO'S SKID ROW POPULATION IN COMPARISON WITH THE CHARACTERISTICS OF THE CITY OF CHICAGO'S POPULATION, 1950 - Continued

| Characteristic | Percent distribution | | Difference from city |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Skid Row | Chicago | |
| Class of worker (emp.persons), total | 100.0 | 100.0 | ... |
| Private wage and salary workers... | 97.3 | 81.9 | 15.4 |
| Government workers..... | 0.9 | 7.4 | -6.5 |
| Self-employed workers..... | 1.8 | 10.6 | -8.8 |
| Unpaid family workers..... | ... | 0.1 | -0.1 |
| Unemployment rate..... | 35.2 | 4.2 | 31.0 |
| Income, total*..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | ... |
| Less than $500..... | 23.7 | 15.0 | 8.7 |
| $500-$999..... | 23.0 | 5.3 | 17.7 |
| $1,000-$1,499..... | 13.1 | 5.0 | 8.1 |
| $1,500-$1,999..... | 12.6 | 5.6 | 7.0 |
| $2,000-$2,499..... | 12.3 | 9.6 | 2.7 |
| $2,500-$2,999..... | 7.1 | 11.1 | -4.0 |
| $3,000-$3,499..... | 4.3 | 14.6 | -10.3 |
| $3,500-$3,999..... | 2.1 | 9.9 | -7.8 |
| $4,000-$4,499..... | 0.5 | 7.4 | -6.9 |
| $4,500-$4,999..... | 0.5 | 4.1 | -3.6 |
| $5,000-$5,999..... | 0.6 | 5.7 | -5.1 |
| $6,000 and over..... | 0.1 | 6.8 | -6.7 |
| Weeks worked last year, total*..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | ... |
| Did not work in 1949..... | 2.0 | 3.4 | -1.4 |
| 1-13 weeks..... | 12.8 | 2.4 | 10.4 |
| 14-26 weeks..... | 16.5 | 4.9 | 11.6 |
| 27-39 weeks..... | 17.0 | 5.6 | 11.4 |
| 40-49 weeks..... | 16.6 | 14.0 | 2.6 |
| 50-52 weeks..... | 35.1 | 69.7 | -34.6 |
| Mobility, total*..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | ... |
| Nonmobile-same house as 1949..... | 68.2 | 87.1 | -18.9 |
| Mobile-different house from 1949.. | 31.8 | 12.8 | 19.0 |
| Different house-Cook County..... | 24.0 | 10.2 | 13.8 |
| Migrant-area outside Cook County | 7.8 | 2.6 | 5.2 |

*Percent distribution based upon the total number of persons for whom information was reported.

i. Irregular in employment, working only part of the one year preceding the census. Whereas only 11 percent of Chicago men worked 6 months or less, 31 percent of Chicago Skid Row men worked this little, and 13 percent worked only 3 months during that year.

j. Above average in their mobility, but with a surprising degree of immobility. It has been presumed that there are many "hoboes" among Skid Row men and that homeless men are continually moving from one hotel or residence to another and from city to city. The census data show that in Chicago this is not true; more than two-thirds of the sample were enumerated in the same hotel or rooming house as they had lived a year earlier, and only 8 percent had moved into Chicago from outside Cook County during the one year preceding the census.

THE SALVATION ARMY HARBOR LIGHT MISSION IS A MAJOR WELFARE RESOURCE ON WEST MADISON STREET

ON SOUTH STATE STREET'S SKID ROW THE PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION IS THE HAVEN FOR DOWN-AND-OUT MEN

## CONCLUSION

Almost every American city of 500,000 or more has a Skid Row neighborhood. Tendencies toward such a development are present in most (and possibly nearly all) cities having 175,000 or more residents. Although there undoubtedly are differences from one Skid Row to another, with each one being unique in some ways, the general characteristics of most Skid Rows are the same: poor housing, occupied by familyless men living under conditions of great economic duress. Chicago appears to have one of the largest Skid Row developments in the nation. A tabulation of census data for a sample of Skid Row residents shows unmistakably that they are a very divergent and depressed group, with high rates of unemployment, incredibly low incomes, irregular employment, and low educational status. Contrary to their reputation, they are not very migratory.

This is Skid Row as seen from a somewhat detached and external viewpoint. What is Skid Row like to the many welfare workers, police, and others who come into contact with this neighborhood every day? What is Skid Row life like to the various kinds of homeless men who live there? Is this a way of life they chose and find satisfying? Is this a closely knit community with common orientation and common values? What is the personality structure of these men? And finally, what happens in the lives of men to cause them to take up residence in such a neighborhood? These are the subjects of the next several chapters of this book.

## SKID ROW AREAS IDENTIFIED

In order to document more adequately the existence of Skid Rows, their location has been mapped for 45 cities. The boundaries shown are approximate, or may have changed since 1959-60 when the data were gathered. In most cases, the boundaries were described by a local observer (planning official, engineer, police official, or public or private welfare agency head) who was familiar with the neighborhoods of his city. In almost every case these areas are set in a much larger zone of blight and physical deterioration. To dramatize the fact that Skid Row is only a part of a larger blighted zone, on the maps the entire census tracts containing the Skid Row areas have also been shaded.

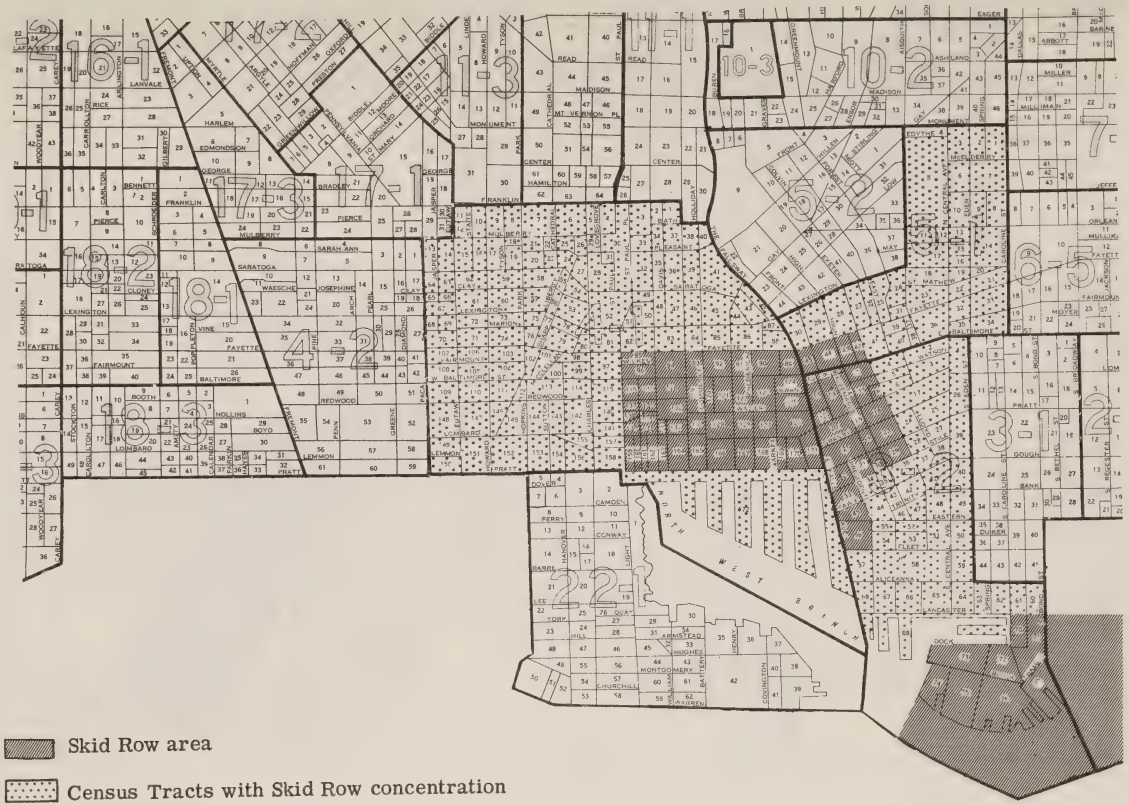
Reasonably exact boundaries were not obtainable for several cities known to have Skid Rows, and maps for them could not be included. However, the author believes that, except for these omissions, together these maps identify fairly precisely those neighborhoods of which a wealthy nation and a prosperous community might be expected to be most ashamed.

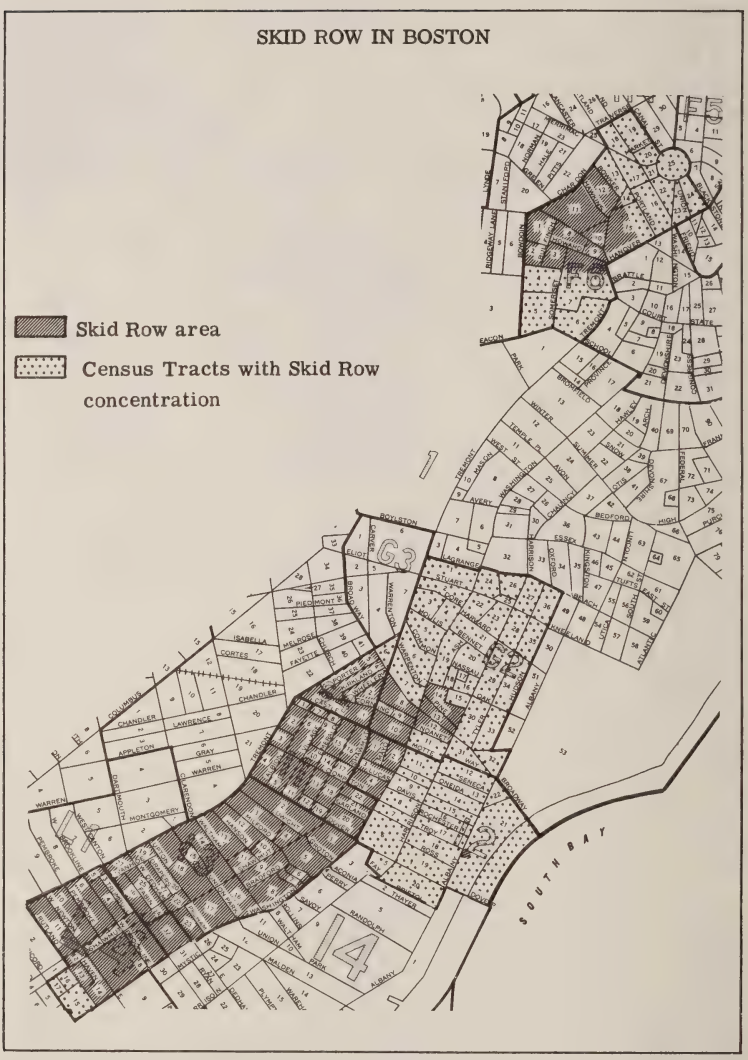
## FOOTNOTES

[1] Other questions were included in this inquiry. The information received is analyzed in other chapters of this volume.

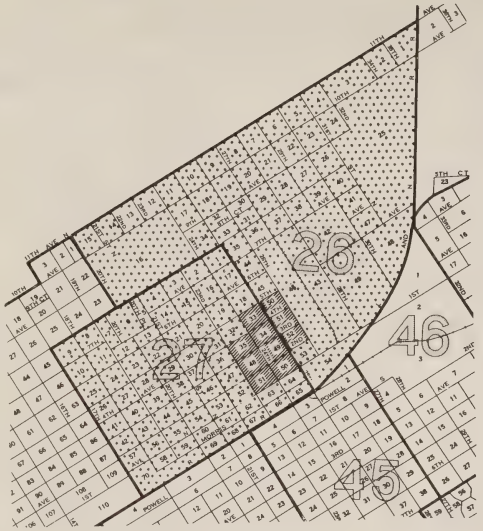
[2] The reader should keep in mind that these data refer to whole census tracts, which usually cover several city blocks. This means that the census tracts which contain Skid Row neighborhoods also contain much adjoining population that does not live in Skid Row lodgings. Hence, the data presented here refer to the general situation in which Skid Rows are found, and only indirectly to the characteristics of Skid Rows and Skid Row residents themselves. Some census data for Skid Row populations of Chicago are presented below to help fill this gap. Two other points must be emphasized: (a) this list of cities with Skid Rows is not complete; these are the places for which reasonably reliable information could be obtained, and (b) the maps refer to the situation as of about 1958-9, and some cities have taken action since then to reduce or eliminate their Skid Rows.

## SKID ROW IN BALTIMORE

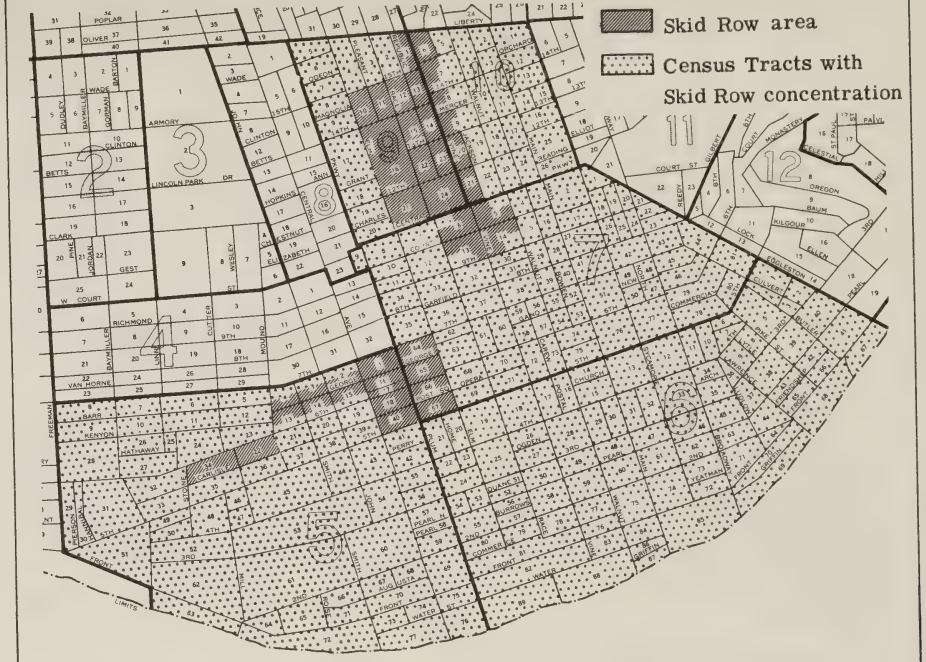



SKID ROW IN BOSTON
Skid Row area
Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration
SOUTH BAY

## SKID ROW IN BIRMINGHAM




## SKID ROW IN CINCINNATI

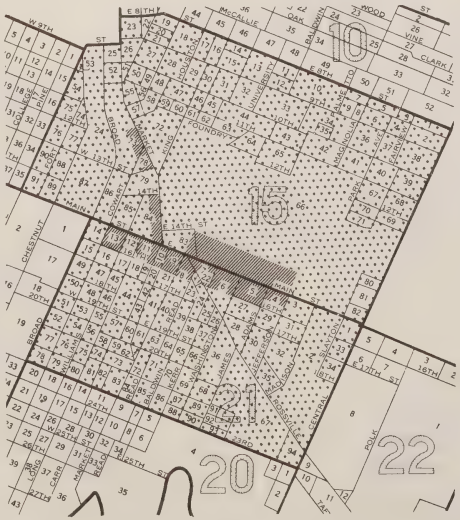


SKID ROW IN BUFFALO

Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN CHATTANOOGA




Skid Row area

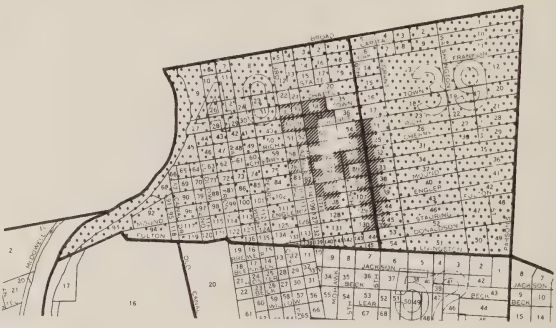
Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN DALLAS

Census Tracts with quasi-Skid Row conditions

SKID ROW IN CLEVELAND, O.

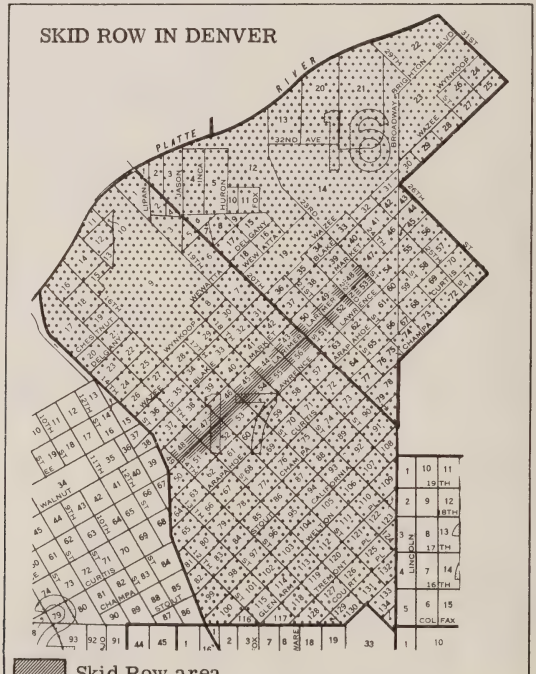
SKID ROW IN COLUMBUS



Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN DENVER




Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN DETROIT

Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row Concentration

SKID ROW IN FORT WAYNE

Skid Row area

Wards with Skid Row Concentration

SKID ROW IN HARTFORD, CONN.

SKID ROW IN FORT WORTH

SKID ROW IN HOUSTON

Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN LOS ANGELES

Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN INDIANAPOLIS

Skid Row area

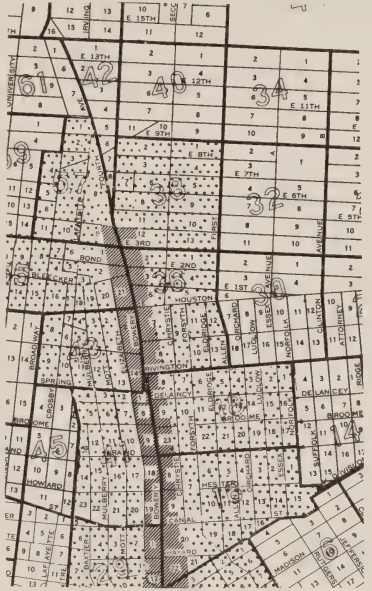
Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN JACKSONVILLE

Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN MANHATTAN BOROUGH



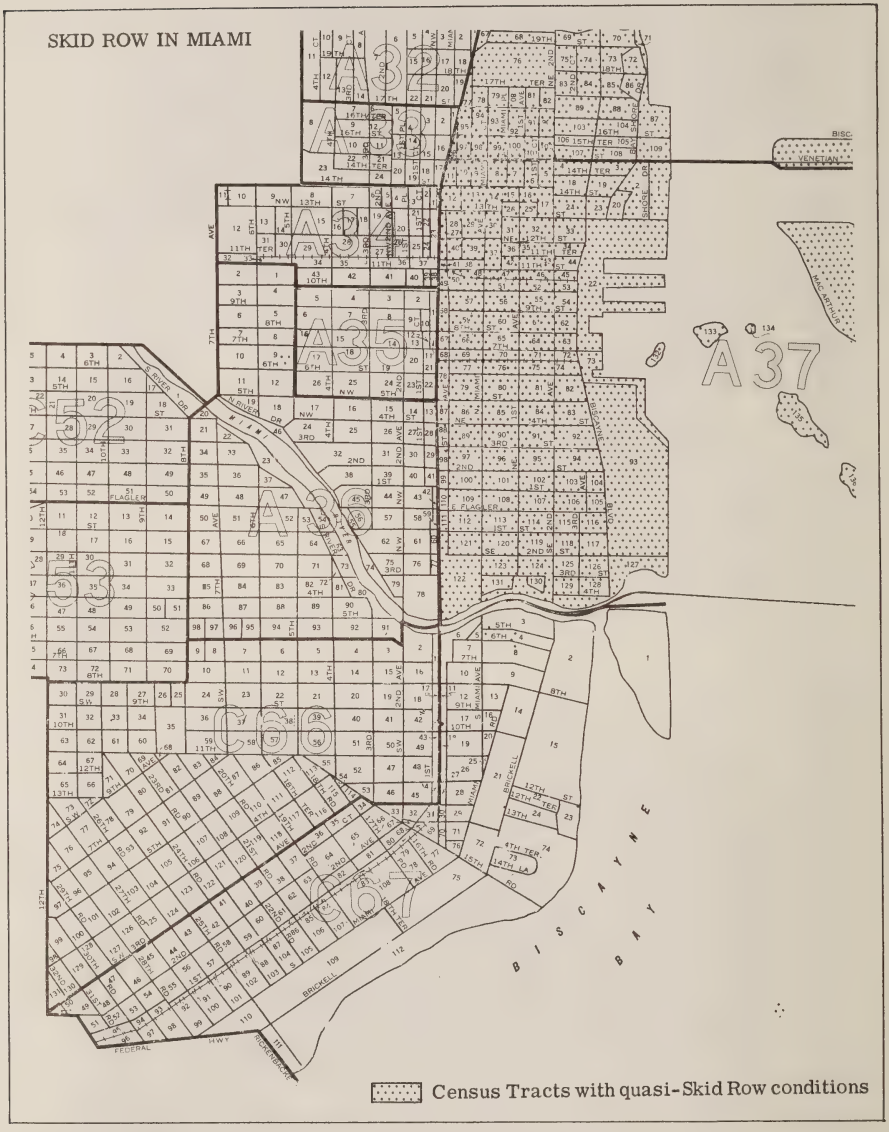
Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

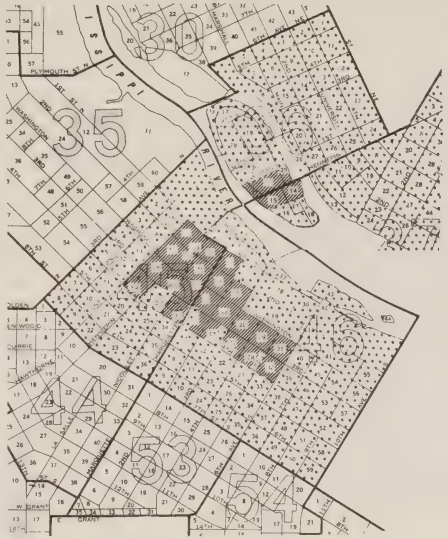
SKID ROW IN MILWAUKEE

Skid Row area

Census Tract with Skid Row concentration


SKID ROW IN MIAMI
A37
BISCAYNE BAY
Census Tracts with quasi-Skid Row conditions

SKID ROW IN MINNEAPOLIS



Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN NEW ORLEANS, LA.

Skid Row area

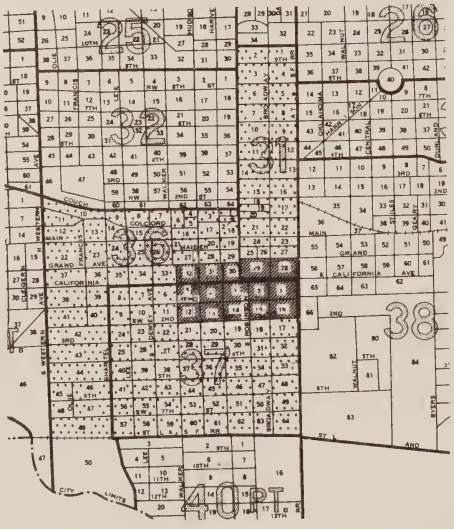
Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN NORFOLK, VA.

Skid Row area

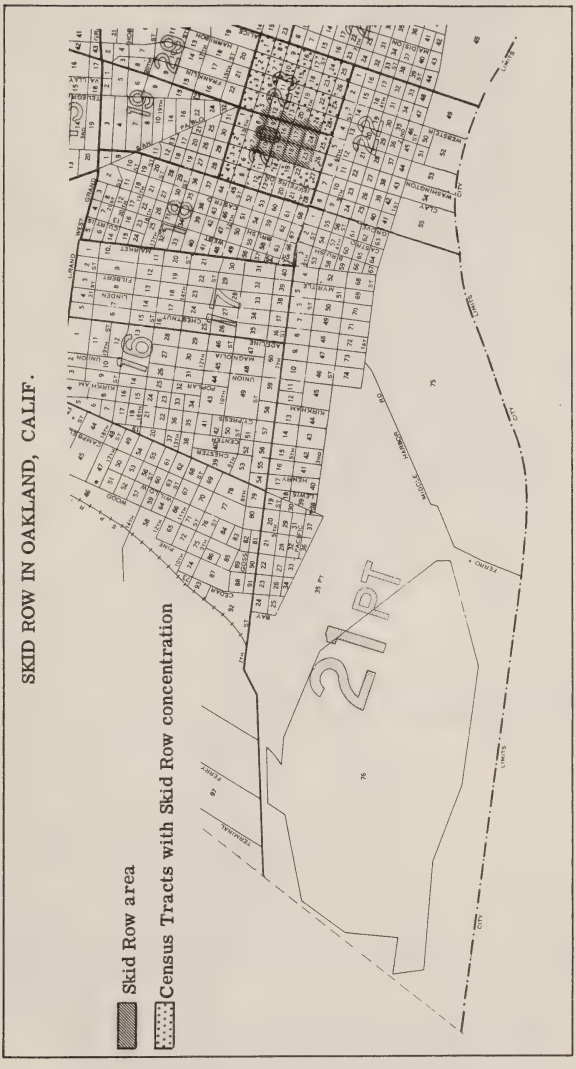
Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

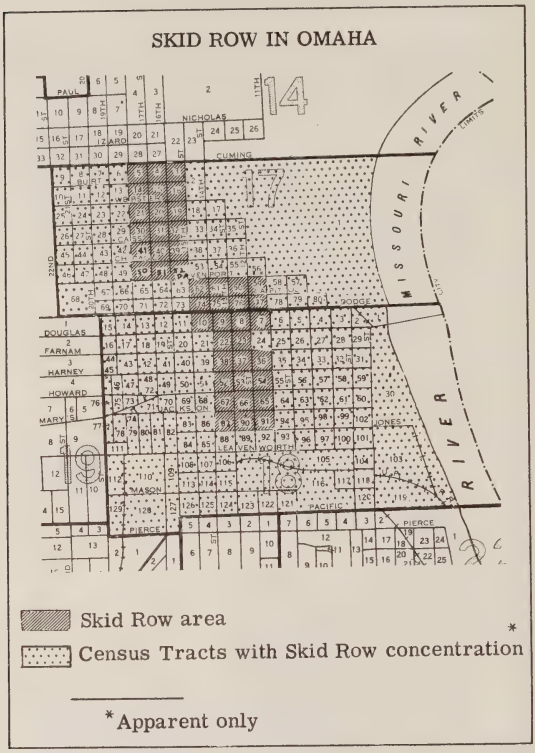
SKID ROW IN OKLAHOMA CITY

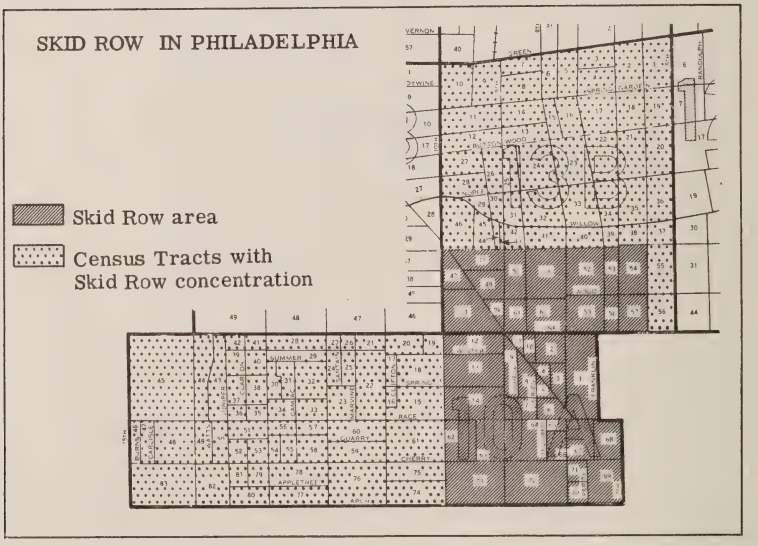


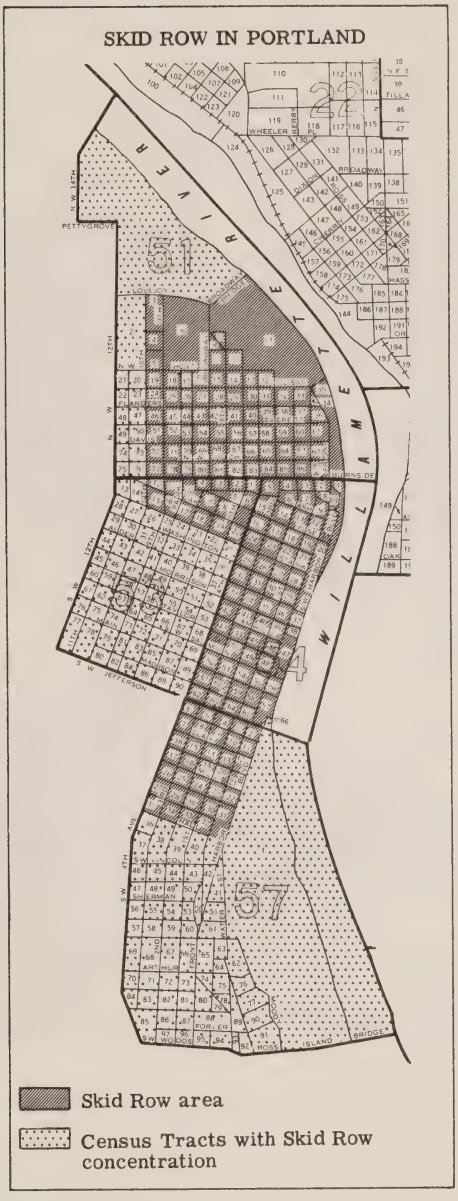

Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

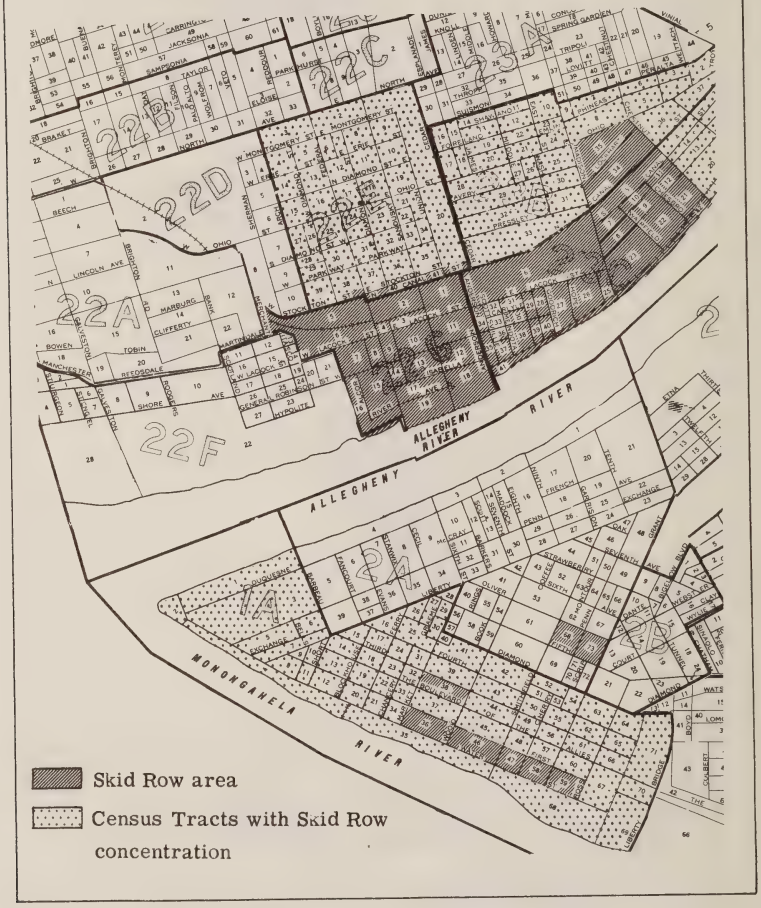

SKID ROW IN OAKLAND, CALIF.
Skid Row area
Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration


SKID ROW IN OMAHA
MISSOURI RIVER
Skid Row area
Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration
*Apparent only

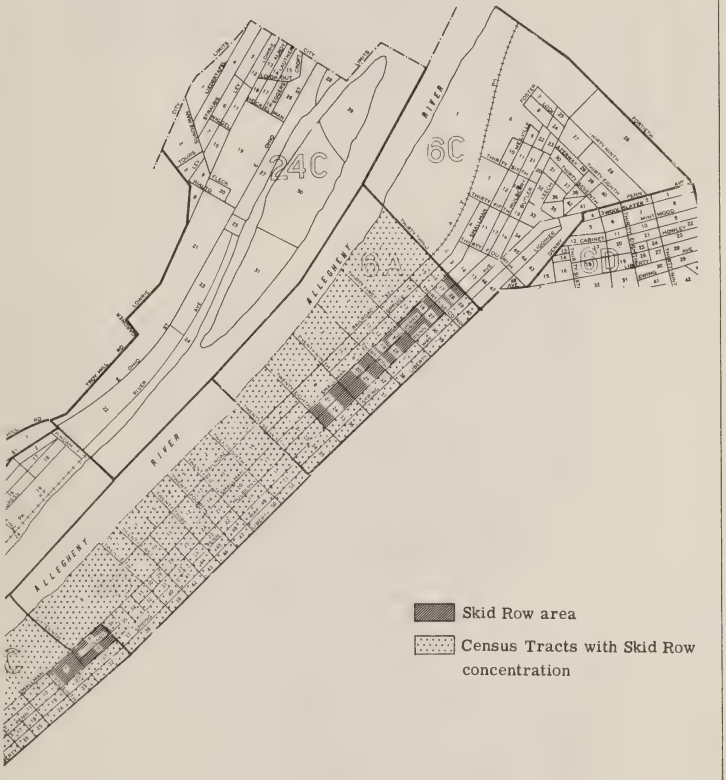

SKID ROW IN PHILADELPHIA
Skid Row area
Census Tracts with
Skid Row concentration

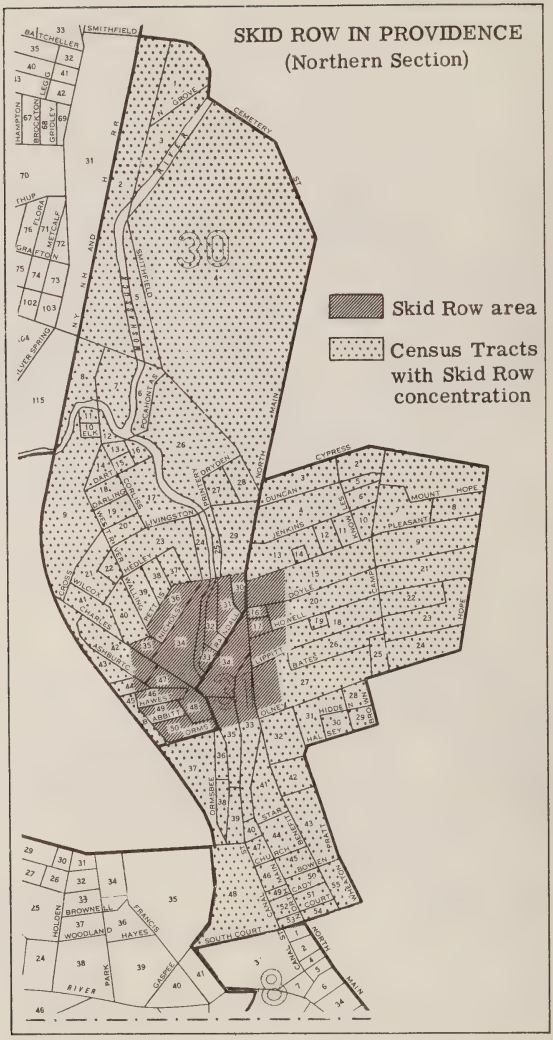

SKID ROW IN PORTLAND
WILLAMETTE RIVER
51
54
57
Skid Row area
Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN PITTSBURGH
(Part 1 of 2 parts)



SKID ROW IN PITTSBURGH (Part 2 of 2 parts)




SKID ROW IN PROVIDENCE
(Northern Section)
Skid Row area
Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration
SMITHFIELD
CEMETERY
CYPRESS
MOUNT HOPE
PLEASANT
DUNCAN
JENKINS
DOYLE
HOPE
BATES
OLNEY
HIDDEN
HALSEY
BROWN
ORMSBEE
STAR
CHURCH
BENEFIT
PRATT
WHEATON
SOUTH COURT
CANAL
HARDY
MAIN
BROWNELL
WOODLAND
HAYES
FRANCIS
HOLDEN
PARK
GASPEE
RIVER
HAMPTON
BROCKTON
GRIDLEY
LEGG
THUP
FLORA
METCALF
GRAFTON
SILVER SPRING
N.Y. N.H. AND H. R.R.
POCAHONTAS
DARTMOUTH
CORLISS
DARLING
WEST RIVER
LIVINGSTON
HEDLEY
WALLING
PETTIS
NICKOLS
WILCOX
CHARLES
ASHBURTON
GROSS
NAWLEY
ARBITT
ORMS
PRINTERY
DRYDEN
NORTH MAIN
CAMP
HOLDEN
LIPPITT
CANAL
30
8

SKID ROW IN PROVIDENCE
(Southern Section)

SKID ROW IN RICHMOND

SKID ROW IN ROCHESTER

Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN SACRAMENTO

Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration *

* Apparent only

SKID ROW IN SAGINAW

Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN ST. LOUIS

Census Tracts with Skid Row Concentration

SKID ROW IN ST. PAUL

Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN SAN JOSE

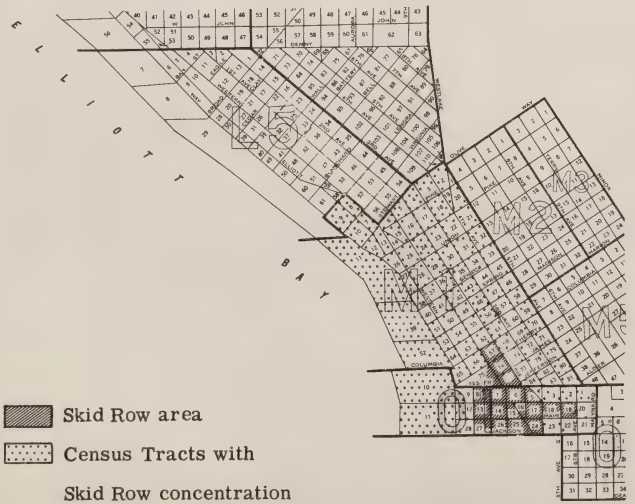
20
25
24
30
29
31
41
42
ST. JOHN
SAN FERNANDO
ALMADEN
MONTGOMERY
FIRST
SAN PEDRO
SAN CARLOS
SAN FERNANDO
SAN JOSE
CAHILL

SKID ROW IN SAN FRANCISCO

Skid Row Area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN SEATTLE




SKID ROW IN SYRACUSE

Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN TACOMA

Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

SKID ROW IN TOLEDO

Skid Row area

Census Tracts with Skid Row concentration

*Chapter 2*

## *WHO LIVES ON SKID ROW, AND WHY— VIEWS OF RESOURCE PERSONS*

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One of the first questions planners ask when the proposal is made to do away with Skid Rows is, "What kinds of persons are these men, and why are they here?" This study attempted to answer this query in two ways: once by interrogating a set of experts who had observed Skid Rows for many years, and once by interviewing a sample of homeless men who actually live there. The present chapter summarizes the responses of the experts; several later chapters are devoted to the information provided by the men themselves.

When the present study was begun, the Skid Row neighborhood was as unfamiliar to the study director as if it were a part of a foreign country. To have rushed unoriented into the stage of interviewing homeless men would have meant risking the danger of failing to ask the most pertinent questions and of having too little insight to comprehend the full meaning of what the men would say. It was decided to preface the Skid Row survey with a preliminary inventory of the ideas of "resource persons" concerning the Skid Row areas and their problems. A great many normal people live outside Skid Row, yet almost daily come into contact with homeless men as a routine part of their work. Many of these people are professional persons who have been trained to observe – and to analyze and interpret what they see and hear. In many cases their professional concern with Skid Row and its problems has extended over many years, so that they have been able to check and recheck their impressions. Among such experts are case workers for both public and private welfare agencies; the presiding judge and other personnel of the Monroe Street Court, which in Chicago handles the cases of men who have been arrested in the Skid Row areas for drunkenness or other offenses; the medical personnel of Cook County Hospital who regularly give medical care to homeless men brought there as emergency or charity cases; the examiners of the Psychiatric Department of the Municipal Court, which screens several dozens of homeless men per month; and the staffs of organizations interested in treating chronic alcoholism. Other less highly trained but nevertheless potentially credible observers are police, religious workers in missions, hotel clerks

and hotel owners, managers of Skid Row retail shops, and the staffs of the jails where the men are sentenced. Even the bartenders should be heard, to get their side of the story.

Upon the basis of available reports about Skid Row conditions and Skid Row life, and a few exploratory interviews with long-time observers, a resource person's interview was drawn up and administered to 161 persons. In Chicago, 87 persons were interviewed through the Field Department of the National Opinion Research Center. The sample was of the "snowball" variety; each respondent was asked to nominate other persons who possessed first-hand knowledge about some aspect of Skid Row and who might be able to provide some fruitful insights. Interviewing was stopped when the persons nominated had all been already interviewed or else their connection with Skid Row was too superficial to justify treating them as resource persons. A questionnaire version of the same interview used in Chicago was mailed to about 200 persons in other cities who were engaged in the same types of activities as the Chicago group, and 74 replies were received.

In the course of this interview, each expert was asked the following three questions:

1. Some people say that all the men on Skid Row are pretty much alike. How do you feel about this — do you agree or disagree? (What makes you say that?)

2. What are the main types or kinds of men one finds in the homeless men areas?

3. What brings each kind of man to the homeless men areas? For each group describe the social or economic forces which attract the men.

The experienced judgments of these long-term observers provides an invaluable backdrop against which to view the statements of the men themselves, to be presented later. As educated professional persons, most of the resource respondents were able to deal with the situation conceptually, whereas the men were much more limited in their ability to take an objective detached and analytic point of view. Moreover, in explaining to the interviewers why they live on Skid Row, many of the men are not aware of some of the forces that have been at work.

In digesting these materials, an effort has been made to represent every different idea submitted by any resource person. In a field such as this, it not infrequently happens that by prolonged observation, keen insight, and concentrated reflection upon a problem, one or two persons may be "years ahead of their time," or "miles ahead of the field." Hence each different idea is reported, irrespective of whether other experts agree or disagree with it.

## WHO LIVES ON SKID ROW?

For purposes of stimulating resource persons to discuss this question, the residents of Skid Row were divided into six major classes, as follows:

A. Elderly or physically disabled men
B. Resident workingmen
C. Migratory workers
D. "Bums" (beggars and panhandlers)
E. Criminals and workers in illegal enterprises
F. Chronic alcoholics

If a man could be classified in two or more different categories, he was placed in the class lowest in the list. For example, elderly men who are also "bums" and "chronic alcoholics" are classed as "chronic alcoholics." The class of "bums" was further subdivided into two groups, "transient bums" and "resident bums." Also, the group of chronic alcoholics was subdivided into three subgroups: (a) those who are physically rehabilitable and have no serious mental illness; (b) those physically rehabilitable but have serious mental illness; and (c) those unable to work and not rehabilitable. The full definition of each group is given later in this chapter.

During the interview with the resource persons, the above classification was submitted, and the respondents were asked (a) to evaluate the classification itself and suggest new categories or to recombine the present ones to make the best possible classification, and (b) to estimate the proportion of men living on Skid Row that falls in each of the categories. Because the classification had been developed after several informal interviews with first-hand observers of Skid Rows and from reading published reports about Skid Row life, it was not surprising that almost all of the respondents found the classification useful, and few suggestions for a radical change were made. One or more resource persons suggested that the following groups should be separately identified:

Runaways and adventurers — young boys who have left home because of a family quarrel or simply "to see the world," and who have landed here without knowing exactly why. Many of these boys are merely temporarily unsettled, and with skillful counseling can be "put straight."

Vacationers — workingmen from other neighborhoods who are periodic drinkers, and who are on a temporary "binge." After a few days they sober up and return to their families and jobs.

Young veterans or unstable young men — young men who served in World War II or the Korean conflict, and who have been coming

in increasing numbers since 1950-52, according to Skid Row observers. These young men appear to have been unable to adjust to the routine of a job, family, and community life, and after drifting from one place to another they finally landed here.

Sex perverts.

Mentally unsound persons — feeble-minded or seriously psychotic men who wander or gravitate to Skid Row. Usually they are picked up rather promptly by the police, and the screening process in the courts causes them to be institutionalized.

Normal residents — businessmen or employees who operate or manage hotels, restaurants, and other facilities on Skid Row and live in the area. This includes many mission workers.

The experts overwhelmingly rejected the idea that homeless men are all alike: 84 percent of them stated that in their judgment, this is untrue. Instead of seeing a single cause for being homeless, they tended to see several different groups of men, with each group having arrived here for a different combination of reasons.

## A. WHY DO ELDERLY AND PHYSICALLY DISABLED MEN LIVE ON SKID ROW?

1. Cheaper living accommodations can be found here than elsewhere in the city. — Rents in a Skid Row cage hotel are cheaper than rents in almost any other type of nonsubsidized dwelling. Prices in the restaurants are generally lower than elsewhere in the city. The person with a small, inadequate income finds that he can more nearly "make ends meet" if he lives on Skid Row than if he were to live in any other neighborhood. This applies with especially strong force to elderly pensioners — men who receive public assistance for age or disability, who are receiving minimum pension benefits from Social Security, or who are retired on small pensions from private firms. The maximum normal old age assistance check for an elderly person living alone was $77 per month in 1958, exclusive of medical costs. The minimum Social Security check was $30 per month but may have been supplemented by old age assistance. An elderly man can live in a cubicle hotel at $5 per week and purchase his meals at the following rates (which certainly are minimal, even on Skid Row):

| | |
|---|---|
| Breakfast | $0.30 |
| Lunch | 0.50 |
| Dinner | 0.80 |
| Total | $1.60 |

Thus he can obtain food and shelter for $68 - $70 per month. At this level his diet will be qualitatively and quantitatively inadequate, and his shelter substandard, but life is sustained.

A significant number of the residents of Skid Row are pensioners who receive extremely small monthly payments; they are among those hardest hit by inflation. Many of these men are known to the Welfare Department, and are part of the regular welfare case load. In 1956 there were 1,242 recipients of old age assistance living in the rectangular area between Halsted Street and Western Avenue, Congress and Lake Streets — Chicago's Madison Street Skid Row and its immediate environs.

For many of these elderly pensioners, the week before the arrival of the pension check is a critical one. If they have been improvident, have been forced to spend their money for an illness, or have been jackrolled during the month, the missions try to help them over these days. If they attend services at a mission, they can pick up one or two free meals each day. With their room rent paid in advance, they are able to get by.

There are other economies of living that can be practiced by Skid Row residents without embarrassment. It is considered proper to wear old clothes or work clothes on the street, in public eating and drinking places, in theatres, etc. The low-income pensioner is not compelled to spend as much of his allotment for clothing, laundry, and dry cleaning as would otherwise be necessary. It is not really essential for him to own a change of clothes, although many do. If he were to appear in an average neighborhood dressed in his everyday Skid Row attire, he would appear conspicuous and out of place.

According to first-hand observers, many, if not most, of the elderly or disabled pensioners are here of economic necessity, not by choice. As one respondent stated it, "These men are not attracted here; they are forced here."

2. Here some types of older men can find companionship and relief from a lonely old age. — Sociologists and psychologists have shown that loneliness and lack of companionship are hardships of old age that are almost as hard to bear as ill health. Several resource persons pointed out that one of Skid Row's assets, and one which would be most welcome to many elderly men, is ready companionship. Here, the experts report, it is not difficult for men who have been laborers to find friends. Men who have spent their lives as "gandy dancers" (railroad maintenance men) can meet and talk over the old days with other ex-gandy dancers. Inasmuch as a very large proportion of the older men who live here are reported to have once been unskilled workers or semiskilled operatives, they have much in common; experience with production lines, itinerant work in agriculture, shops, trucks, strikes,

MEN VISITING ON SKID ROW. EACH HAS HIS REASONS FOR BEING HERE — WORK AND CHEAP LIVING ARE MAJOR ONES

LOWER COST OF FOOD IS ONE OF THE REASONS WHY RETIRED PENSIONERS LIVE ON SKID ROW

bosses, unions, etc., is a common ground. Many times, old folks who live in a normal community are ignored and isolated by the younger generation around them, with the result that, despite living in comfortable surroundings, they are most discontented. In recent years, some communities have provided special "day centers" where elderly people may congregate, socialize, and share common activities. Resource persons point out that this type of activity has long been a Skid Row institution. On Skid Row, it seems, an older man can easily find someone who has the same kind of problem that he has, or will at least listen to his problems in exchange for the privilege of relating problems in return.

By placing such strong emphasis upon this aspect of Skid Row life, several of the resource persons implied that, on balance, the poor pensioner, living here in privation and well below an average standard of comfort and nutrition, may be little more unhappy than many older men who live elsewhere in comfort but in semi-isolation and without companionship.

3. In many cases homeless men are neglected persons: No one wants them. — Many of the elderly or disabled men on Skid Row are widowers who have children or other relatives who could afford to give economic aid. Their neglect is said to have several causes. Since the oldster has lost his economic usefulness, he is no longer welcomed as one of the family. The children may live in a small apartment, and taking in the father may cause inconvenience or may require moving to a place with additional room. If there are grandchildren the interference of the grandfather in child rearing may be resented. Sometimes an oldster who is an uneducated workingman who has worn rough clothing and used workingman's language all his life is a source of embarrassment to a child who has settled in a middle-class neighborhood. When the elderly man needs support from his children because his own income is inadequate, and when that support is not given, he must seek a low cost-of-living area like Skid Row.

In describing this situation, several of the resource people interpreted it as an indictment of American family life. They pointed out that in many cultures the family has an obligation to care for its elderly and disabled members, but that this feeling of responsibility seems to be dying out in our culture.

4. In a few instances, homeless men are the "last of the tribe."— Some of the old men on Skid Row have no immediate family. They have outlived their wives and all of their brothers and sisters, and have no living children. There is no one to take an interest in them, to help them, or to give them a home. When this situation is coupled with low income, they have almost no alternative but to live in a place like Skid Row.

5. Some elderly or disabled homeless men are social outcasts or unstable persons. — Several resource persons warned against the easy conclusion that every elderly man living on Skid Row is an innocent victim of callous relatives, the inexorable and merciless working of an inflated economic system, or the impersonal and inflexible welfare and pension laws. Some of them were described as men who have been social misfits or in poor mental health throughout their lives. They may have been social nonconformists with deviant social values, emotionally disturbed men who were fired from one job after another for being trouble makers, cantankerous "misfits" who are given to unpredictable and unwarranted temper flareups, or rebellious persons who have persistently challenged the organization and authority of the generally accepted social institutions. At home they may have been the party of major fault in decades of family fusses, child neglect, and abuse of other family members. They may have gambled away or drunk up a large share of their earnings, leaving their families to struggle along. Some were slovenly in their dress and personal habits. Wives who have suffered through such an experience in order to maintain a home for their children frequently desert the husband when the children are grown. The children may feel no obligation to an elderly father of this type, and may not want to risk their own marital happiness or the proper upbringing of their own children by taking him into their household. If old men who are social outcasts are disliked and avoided in their own neighborhood because they are guilty of years of family neglect and irresponsibility, they can find others like themselves on Skid Row, and can spend their days condemning the society that finally ceased to tolerate them — without the risk of being contradicted by evidence that they were the major transgressors of social rules.

In fairness, as some resource people point out, it must also be admitted that Skid Row is sometimes a hide-out for an elderly man who faithfully stuck by a shrewish wife and a bad family situation until the children were grown, and then marched off to enjoy a few years of freedom from domination — surrendering whatever worldly goods he possessed as a payment for this privilege.

6. Some older men are heavy drinkers, and have ended up on Skid Row for that reason.— Some of the elderly men on Skid Row are chronic alcoholics, and others have been or are very heavy drinkers. If they are pensioned or have some other fixed but assured income, one way to maximize their drinking is to live here where food and lodging take a smaller bite from the monthly check, where cheap liquor is readily available, and where drinking companions are plentiful. Some of these men reportedly migrate here after their retirement or after the dissolution of their families, while others are simply long-time residents of Skid Row who were heavy drinkers as workingmen and now are heavy

drinkers in retirement.

7. Some older men are here because of employment and other conveniences.— Convenience probably is not enough in itself to account for the presence of these older men in Skid Row neighborhoods, but it is a factor frequently mentioned as a contributing cause. In Chicago's West Madison Street area, for example, the employment offices offering "spot jobs," Cook County Hospital and several medical clinics from which medical care can be obtained free or at low cost, and the public assistance offices of the Welfare Department, are located nearby. Coupled with the other factors mentioned above, this means that less mobility is required to live here than in many other neighborhoods. In addition, the center of town is only a short walk away, and the transportation system is arranged so that one can reach any part of the city within a reasonably short time.

8. For a few itinerant and other destitute elderly men, Skid Row is the last stop.— The man who cannot work because of age or disability, who has no savings and no means of support, and who cannot fulfill the residence requirements of the state has almost no alternative but to land on Skid Row. There is no other community that is set up to care for him in the city, unless it institutionalizes him or ships him to another state where he may be almost equally unwelcome and without care. Within this group will be found many ex-migratory farm workers, railroad workers, and construction workers who drifted from one job to another for many years. Here also will be found the elderly hobo and the elderly bum who have spent their lives begging or in other parasitic activities. There are others who, because of ignorance of the laws or loopholes in the law, have not claimed their welfare rights, or have lost them. On Skid Row are located the Salvation Army and the rescue missions — those organizations that "care when nobody else does," and it is to them that down-and-out elderly men must turn as a last resort. There are said to be men of working age whose injuries prevent them from holding a job in their old industry and who cannot get a new type of job they can handle that will support them. This is especially true of older injured men, who may have been inadequately compensated years ago for injuries incurred on the job. Others are simply men who lack Social Security coverage, and who do not qualify for old age assistance or public assistance, and who are old or in poor health. Some of these men are fully aware that they could get help if they would agree to be institutionalized, but they are said to be too individualistic, too resentful of regime, to "go to the poor-farm to die."

9. Welfare and social agencies are forced, by circumstance, to send older and disabled men here.— All of the social agencies in the city are working on very limited budgets. The requests for their services are greater than the amounts available for aid in most cases. When de-

serving elderly men apply for emergency aid — a bed for the night, assistance until their pension arrangements can be completed, housing until the hospital can take them in, and in the numerous other situations where a welfare agency must act — often there is no alternative but to house and feed them in the cheapest possible place — Skid Row. By giving each applicant enough money to pass the night in a Skid Row hotel and to eat in Skid Row restaurants, a charitable organization can assist approximately twice as many men as it could if it sent each one to the YMCA or equivalent accommodations. Faced with the choice of serving only half their clients well or of serving almost all at a minimum level, they take the latter course. This choice is forced upon welfare workers in both public and private organizations.

## B. WHY DO SETTLED AND SEMI-SETTLED WORKINGMEN LIVE ON SKID ROW?

1. It is the employment center for unskilled and daily laborers. — In Chicago, Skid Row is a manpower pool. West Madison Street and vicinity is one of the leading centers for hiring men for jobs as laborers. The men call employment by the day "spot job" work; a high percentage of the workingmen on West Madison Street are "spot job" workers. The railroad employment offices hire "gandy dancers" here to ship out and work on railroad maintenance crews. Several commercial employment contractors are located here, and the largest of them advertise that they can supply any number of men for temporary labor as truck helpers, carloaders, lumber handlers, packers, stockmen, factory laborers, and other general labor. These contractors hire and pay the men, keep all records, pay all insurance and handle withholdings. The firm for which the work is done pays only one labor bill which is to the labor contractor. Numerous employment agencies here recruit men for individual jobs as dishwashers, janitors, handbill distributors, and other unskilled work.

Also, the Illinois State Employment Service maintains a branch Casual Labor Office that specializes in temporary and unskilled jobs. Several of the missions in all parts of Skid Row offer job-finding assistance, and have arrangements with several employers for placing men in their rehabilitation programs. The State Employment Service even keeps a man stationed at the Monroe Street Court to offer "spot jobs" to unemployed men being released from overnight detention. Several large freight handling, manufacturing, or construction firms (and some department stores and other retail houses) hire day laborers directly off the street. They send their trucks to West Madison Street between 5:00 and 8:00 A.M., and men who are on the spot and ready to work are hired for the day and hauled away to the job. On South State Street

there are similar employment opportunities to work in freight handling, restaurants, and other laborer jobs.

One of the most attractive features of "spot jobs" is that the men are paid at the end of each working day. The man who is completely broke or the man who wants to drink does not need to wait until payday at the end of the week to get his money. But the work available is frequently unpleasant and hard. Almost always it is low-paying, and purely temporary. Some resource people reported that a significant proportion of the men do not want to work every day, but prefer to seek only spot work for two or three days a week in order to earn enough to pay their living expenses.

Information about new jobs and scuttlebut about old ones are reported to be principal topics of conversation on Skid Row. By living here, the unskilled workingman can keep informed about possible opportunities. Also, he can leave his bed and be on the spot where he can be hauled to work at an early morning hour with a minimum of effort.

2. For many, it is almost the only place they can afford to live. — The resource persons advised that most day laborers and "spot job" workers earn $0.75 to $1.20 per hour (often with one or more meals "thrown in"). They do not get jobs every day they apply. Many jobs do not last a whole day, but only a few hours. Older men, disabled men, or men in poor physical condition are picked last and often they have difficulty earning enough money to live — even when jobs are more plentiful. The net pay of even a sober younger man who tries to work as steadily as opportunities permit may average as little as $20 to $35 per week, and if he hits a streak of bad luck in some weeks it will be almost zero.

Hence, many settled workingmen must face the same economic problem that confronts the pensioner: having to get by on a low income. Skid Row's cheap hotels and restaurants make it possible for an unskilled day laborer, working only part time, to obtain food and shelter without resorting to charity. If bad luck does come and he cannot find work, or if he decides to take a "vacation," the missions are there to help tide him over.

One useful function of Skid Row that several resource persons mentioned is that it is the bottom rung of the ladder to success for many low income migrants to the metropolis. Each year an unknown and possibly quite large number of men arrive in the city to seek work who are so nearly broke that they can afford to eat and sleep only in the cheapest places until they get established. Often they come here with money loaned or given them by charitable organizations who are assisting them in their efforts. Such men may spend a week or a month on Skid Row and then move out forever to a better neighborhood. At the present Skid Row seems to be performing this service especially often

for low-income migrants from the South or from other areas with poor rural populations. For ambitious, hard working, able-bodied men to whom the life on "the stem" has no appeal, there is simply a quick in-and-out movement; they leave as quickly as they can afford something better.

3. For some, the social life on Skid Row is attractive. — Some of the resource persons familiar with life on "the street" report that to the unskilled laboring man with no family ties, Skid Row may appear to be a most exciting place, with a variety of activities and an attractiveness that the outsider may not easily appreciate. The unskilled day laborer who is unmarried may have very little in common with the residents of most neighborhoods in the city. He has no family interests, his occupational level is one that they may look down on, and his manner of dress may add to his being regarded as an unwelcome outsider. Instead of being semi-isolated in a family neighborhood, the workingman on Skid Row can meet and associate with others on his own job level — perhaps the friends with whom he works in the daytime. Many of the Skid Row hotels have lobbies or recreation rooms with TV sets, facilities for playing checkers or cards, or space for just conversing. If his earnings are enough, he can spend some of his evenings in the taverns, socializing with others of similar interests and outlook. Here he will feel comfortable with respect to matters of dress, income, recreation, interests and topics of conversation. It is reported that sometimes several friends form a corporation and pool their income for the use of all, so that there is greater mutual security. One's friends then are a kind of social insurance against unemployment, lack of food, etc.

Those who pointed out this aspect of Skid Row did not claim that this is the only neighborhood in the city where an unmarried laborer can live happily or that all laborers are attracted to the social life of Skid Row. They did want it understood, however, that not a few of the workingmen who live here do so not only to be near the source of jobs and because it is cheap, but also because they like it.

4. Some workingmen like to live here because of drinking. — For some unattached workingmen, drinking is a major pastime and recreation. Such men want to spend a part of almost every evening drinking, either in the taverns or in a hotel room. They may be moderate or heavy drinkers who work quite steadily and who seldom are arrested for being drunk. Undoubtedly many of these perennial drinkers eventually become chronic alcoholics. Several of the resource persons reported their impression that some of the workingmen prefer to live here where they can be close to drinking companions, where congenial taverns welcome them even though they are dressed in working clothes, and where they can spend a minimum on food and shelter in order to increase the amount of money available for drinking.

5. Some workingmen are psychological and social misfits who are here because they are trying to escape normal society. — A certain proportion of workingmen have left their home communities for personal reasons and settled here in order to get away from social situations which they found intolerable or as a substitute for living in a desirable situation from which they have been expelled. Family trouble, a major disappointment or sorrow, acute maladjustment to a given job or other responsibility, and other psychological and personal problems may produce the unsettled condition in which they find themselves. Not infrequently persons in such a plight want to go where they cannot easily be found, or where they can be anonymous and no one will ask questions or quiz them about their past successes or failures. Skid Row is reported to be a place where a man can keep his business to himself if he chooses, and where relationships between people are friendly but casual. If there is an incentive to drink, Skid Row may prove to be a double attraction.

6. Some workingmen may live here because of a low standard of living and lack of ambition to live any other way. — Some men appear to have a very low level of aspiration; instead of working hard for a promotion or to increase their income and level of living, they prefer a lazier life. Such men may have come from homes where life was crude and rough with little hope of improvement or where there was little chance to learn or appreciate how other people live. It is said that many Skid Row men were reared in poverty-stricken "backwoods" communities (especially in the southern mountains), where they became acquainted with heavy and rather steady drinking early in their childhood, and Skid Row life may not seem to them to be so poor and uncomfortable as it does to others of different upbringing. The resource persons who mentioned this pointed out that while all homeless men have had a home at some time, these homes may have represented a range of social positions and social aspirations that varied from very low to very high.

## C. WHY DO MIGRATORY WORKERS LIVE ON SKID ROW?

1. When he first lands in town, many an itinerant worker is in urgent need of services that only Skid Row provides easily. — The transient laborer who arrives in the metropolis often is in a very sad state, both physically and economically — usually unbathed, with clothes dirty from prolonged traveling, and needing a haircut. He may have a beard of several days' growth. Sometimes his clothing is so worn and torn that it is important to discard it and secure better before applying for work. He may be broke and badly in need of a job that will pay wages immediately so he will have money to buy a meal and to find a place to

stay during the night. Frequently he is ill and needing medical attention which he cannot afford. In Chicago he can get quick help toward re-establishing himself by walking into the Social Welfare Department of the Monroe Street Court, the Salvation Army, or one of the other large missions with a staff organized to meet these needs. This is especially true if he seems to be a genuine workingman in temporary need, and not a professional beggar. Several resource persons suggested that the newly arrived migrant worker would be viewed with suspicion in any other community and help would be postponed until he had been investigated, but on Skid Row his needs are understood and help is offered.

2. Living is cheaper. — Because his work is irregular and low-paid, the itinerant worker must stay in places where food and lodging cost little. Even if he were not in the dire straits described above, he would still be attracted to Skid Row hotels and restaurants upon his arrival in the city for this reason.

3. Skid Row is the employment center for migratory workers. — Near here are located the railroad employment offices and other employment offices that hire workers to ship out to jobs all over the country. Since railroad, construction, agricultural, and other work is seasonal, the number of migratory workmen arriving on Skid Row fluctuates. In the late winter and early spring they begin to arrive in great numbers from their winter homes. They live in the Skid Row hotels where they can minimize expenses and be readily available when their turn to be called up comes around. There is a mutual adjustment: employers know that here they can get workmen who are willing to be shipped out, and the men who are willing know when to come here to get hired.

4. Skid Row is the communication center for migratory workers. — Equally as important as employment is the information that flows along "the stem" by word of mouth. Many men are simply in transit to a particular place to look for work, and by conversing with men who have recently been there they can get information about jobs, working conditions, and pay. Tipoffs on the towns where the judges give stiff sentences for vagrancy or drunkenness, new arrangements that have been devised for making it difficult to travel by freight train or by hitchhiking, and the best ways of getting to the desired destination, can be learned through conversations in the bars, in hotel lobbies, and on the street. If a man does not have a job, and cannot get hired locally, he can get suggestions about where to migrate next.

5. Skid Row has a nationwide reputation for welcoming strangers who are workingmen. — The migratory workingman who arrives in the city as a stranger probably has been told many times that he need not be a stranger long on Skid Row, that there he will be received with real friendliness and tolerance. Chicago's Skid Row has a reputation for

being "the place to stay" when in Chicago. As one resource person put it, "It is touted from coast to coast as a street to make." Here the newcomer will find other migratory workingmen of like interests, income, occupation and philosophy. His poor dress, his lack of money, his line of work are accepted as normal here, and he does not "stick out like a sore thumb" (a figure of speech used by some resource people) as he would in many other communities in the city. Some of the resource informants reported that Chicago's reputation in this respect is so good that migratory workingmen in transit often stop over for a few days' vacation before traveling on, and that many workingmen released from a seasonal job somewhere in the hinterland beat their ways to Chicago for a few weeks of living on Skid Row before going to their winter homes or other destinations. In describing this situation, the resource persons pointed out that there are taverns, cheap hotels, and other facilities attractive to unmarried workingmen in almost any metropolitan city, but that in the towns without a Skid Row, the strange unskilled laborer is viewed as an outsider and shown very little friendliness. For this reason, the wandering worker, "the man without a home," is said to find the nearest equivalent to community feeling, companionship, and a sense of belonging to society on the Skid Rows of the largest cities.

6. Some migratory workers want and need the tolerance and anonymity that Skid Row provides. — Usually the migratory worker is footloose for very specific reasons. Many times these reasons are highly commendable, such as a search for better paying and more satisfactory employment than is available at home. At other times, the migratory worker is said to be a restless social misfit who uses Skid Row as a hiding place to avoid normal community contacts and responsibilities. He may be running away from something — a wife, parents, or simply the responsibility of being an adult. He even may be trying to evade the police. Several resource persons stated that a considerable number of men with a "wanderlust" were started on their careers of wandering by public censure for acts committed in their home communities. (A warning to "leave town and never come back" is often substituted for a jail sentence.) They also claimed that flights of this kind sometimes are accompanied by intense feelings of self-disgust and loss of self-respect, so that to such a man his past is painful and something to be forgotten and hidden.

The Skid Row community is well known for its tolerance and lack of concern for a man's past. The newcomer can tell as much or as little about himself as he chooses. If a man becomes indiscreet and tells too much to his drinking companions, there is little danger of his whereabouts being reported to the police, to his family, or to the welfare department in another city that may want him for non-support or some

other reason. Not infrequently the self-hatred that comes with flight is said to be accompanied by efforts to blot out the past by heavy drinking. Skid Row is equipped to provide the runaway not only with the tolerance and anonymity he desires, but also with the means to continue to avoid facing up to his problems.

## D. Part 1: WHY DO TRANSIENT BUMS LIVE ON SKID ROW?

As mentioned earlier, the word "bum" — to which many resource persons strongly objected — is used in this report to refer to a man who is able to perform useful work but who makes a living by begging or trying to "work" the missions and welfare agencies. The transient bum is almost a perennial wanderer, a vagabond. When such men arrive in a city they are said to head directly for the Skid Row section, and to use it as their base of operations while in that town. To the transient bum, Skid Row offers all of the attractions it holds for the migratory worker (see Part C, above). It is especially useful to him as a communication center, but it offers some additional advantages.

1. It offers the maximum opportunity to get by with a minimum of work. — One resource person said that the chief factor bringing these men to Skid Row is:

> . . . Laziness — complete lack of social responsibility. They have absolutely no personal pride. It is the one area in the city that has the most agencies ready to help. All they want to do is to be helped. I consider them the lowest form in the area. They just go from one welfare agency to another. They are a non-complaining lot. They come here to take advantage of charity.

Unless Skid Row is unusually crowded, the charitable agencies will find a place for a transient to sleep, and will give him a meal for at least one night — be he bum or traveling worker. In fact, if there is a shortage of beds, the strange bum often is given priority over the "home guard" (resident) bum. Skid Row, the central business district, and certain main thoroughfares, are the only places in the metropolis where the bum can successfully ply his trade. If he tries door-to-door begging as he does in small towns or in the country, householders call the police.

The missions are fully aware that bums often attend services solely for the purpose of getting a meal or a bed, and that some will "take a nose dive" (publicly fake a conversion) in order to get preferential treatment. Nevertheless, they tolerate this hypocrisy on the grounds that the cumulative effect will be to make the bum change his ways someday. Sociologists have pointed out that this mission activity performs a very useful service to the community by controlling the professional beggar. It helps keep him within a single nonfamily area and

satisfies him to the point that he is not inclined to pester "good" neighborhoods or to undertake more predatory types of activity directed towards getting something for nothing. It keeps his attention focused on a few spots where the police can keep him under surveillance, and where facilities and opportunities for changing his way of life are repeatedly presented to him.

2. They can get help from other bums. — Bums are said sometimes to form mutual assistance corporations in which they pool their resources. When one man has money or food he shares it with his buddies, so that he may be taken care of when he is down. Bums are not the only ones on Skid Row who form mutual security corporations, but they are reported by some observers to be among the most active participants in such informal organizations. They are also thought to be among the groups most inclined to form a "bottle gang" (a group of men who pool a few cents each to buy a bottle, which they pass around until the liquor is gone). Bums also share information about travel conditions, places to make an easy touch, and other things that are useful to itinerants who do not pay their way.

To the transient bum with little money, Skid Row provides a maximum of quick security. By starting with the generosity of the missions and combining it with the security of membership in a corporation of fellow bums, he is able to establish himself quickly. Skid Row is the best one-stop place in town for him to get a bed, get a meal, and find a cheap bottle.

Many bums are said to try to beg from, or act as parasites on, other down-and-outers or poor pensioners as a completely selfish activity, without thought or intention of repayment or of mutual aid.

3. Some bums expect and want nothing better than Skid Row conditions. — Vagabonds who travel by freight train or by hitchhiking rides on trucks — sleeping in the open, cooking over campfires, rummaging through waste cans for food — are reported to look upon the living conditions on Skid Row as acceptably good, or even luxurious. To such a bum, a sojourn in a Skid Row flophouse, meals in the cheap restaurants, and participation in the social life along "the stem" is living in comparative comfort.

4. They have least trouble with the police here. — The transient bum can count on having less trouble with the police if he stays on Skid Row and its fringes than if he wanders into middle-class residential neighborhoods. On Skid Row he is not only tolerated, but his dress, his manner of living, and his activities blend harmoniously with the environment; his desire to remain anonymous — especially so far as the police are concerned — is fulfilled. Here there is probably less threat of being booked for vagrancy, loitering, or disturbing the peace than in other neighborhoods.

5. Bums are social outcasts who are welcome nowhere else, or anti-social rebels who feel at home nowhere else. — The transient bum is either a social outcast or a social nonconformist in almost every respect. In his minimization of work, in his lack of residential stability, in his failure to assume community and family responsibilities, etc., he does not conform. He is looked upon with intolerance, disgust, and fear by residents of other neighborhoods. If he receives help, often it is simply to pacify him and hurry him on his way, rather than to express compassion or good will. Skid Row extends perhaps almost the only gestures of respect, personal appreciation, companionship, and tolerance the bum experiences outside of the hobo "jungles" or camps along the railroads. For this reason, the social life, the evenings spent in taverns or with bottle gangs, the mob scenes along the street may be the brightest memories of the transient bum. If he ever does change his ways and become a more conventional member of society, the decisive influences will probably have come from the metropolitan Skid Row institutions and not from the hinterland society.

## D. Part 2: WHY DO RESIDENT BUMS LIVE ON SKID ROW?

For the same reasons that it is a good base of operations for the transient bum, Skid Row is a favorite location of resident bums. Also, the same factors that were described for the settled or semi-settled workingman exert their force to make this area an attractive place for settled or semi-settled bums. However, there are some additional reasons for the bum to choose this as his neighborhood.

1. In many cases the resident bum is simply a transient bum who has settled down. — After a certain amount of traveling, the bum has had a chance to "shop and compare." A certain proportion decides that Chicago (or one of the other cities with a Skid Row) is the best place in the long run. One resource person emphasized this point by saying, "A bum chooses the city that is best for him. This city has been quite kind to him and he stays."

2. In a few cases he is able to become a semi-permanent benificiary of charity.— By remaining in one state long enough to qualify as a resident and by skillful and consistent use of lies and deceit, some bums are able to get on public assistance and to stay there for a considerable length of time, although they are not deserving and do not qualify honestly. They know how to maximize unemployment compensation and how to avoid or delay having to accept work that is offered them by the welfare departments without having their payments stopped. Despite a program of continuous vigilance and investigation by welfare agencies, they manage to find or create loopholes and get relief checks, disability checks, and unemployment checks to which they are not morally

or legally entitled. During the time he is working such a racket, the bum becomes a settled citizen of Skid Row.

3. Skid Row usually is highly accessible to the central business district, the railroad stations, and other places favorable for panhandling or begging. — Most cities have rigid laws against begging. The police will pick up the man who begs openly or who stays in one spot. But skillful beggars are supposed to know how to panhandle in a manner that causes little attention and that keeps them out of the watchful eye of the police. Skid Row is a convenient home port from which to make begging forays, and to which to return at night.

4. Skid Row is a good address for a bum in trouble. — If a beggar is picked up for panhandling, one of his favorite alibis is supposed to be that he had been drinking and did not know what he was doing. If he lists a Skid Row cubicle hotel as an address, and proves that he does live there, his story sounds more plausible to the judge. If a beggar who makes a comfortable living were to display it by choosing good quarters in another part of the city, his acts probably would cause greater resentment, and if arrested invite greater punishment, than if he minimizes his actual income and lives the life of Skid Row.

5. Some bums are homosexual, and earn part of their livelihood as such. — People with perverted sex tendencies are said to be scattered throughout all social strata of the city. Some of them are homosexuals who have good jobs, money, and social positions. Skid Row, it was reported, offers them one safe way to pursue their sex life in comparative safety, and some bums (usually younger men) on Skid Row are said to accept pay for participating. Also, bums who are homosexuals tend to stay in the neighborhood because homosexuality is tolerated here more than in other neighborhoods.

However, homosexuality is not monopolized by resident bums, even on Skid Row. It is said that many transient bums and resident workingmen are also similarly afflicted. For some of these other groups, homosexuality is simply a means of expression which Skid Row permits, whereas for some bums it is a partial source of livelihood.

6. This is the place where bums are abused least. — The bum is tolerated less than almost any other type of person on Skid Row, except the jackroller. But even here he is given better treatment than he would get in most other neighborhoods. The police are more inclined to leave him alone; he is not rejected so completely by his fellow men; he finds others of his kind to form mutual assistance corporations; and he is close to the institutions that will befriend him and grant some of his wishes. Hence, he gets less personal abuse and lives in greater security here than he could elsewhere.

7. The bum sometimes is an ex-alcoholic. — Many or most bums are heavy drinkers, but some are said to be alcoholics who "hit the bottom"

and came back. They may be too old, too weakened, or too dull to hold a job, and must survive from begging and working the missions. There is a class of bum called the "mission stiff" who feigns religious conversion and becomes a more or less permanent part of a mission's staff or activities in order to establish a solid claim to food and lodging. This requires abstaining from drinking — at least during the sojourn in the mission, and may last for only a few days or several months.

## E. WHY DO CRIMINALS AND WORKERS IN ILLEGAL ENTERPRISES LIVE ON SKID ROW?

The resource persons painted a much more varied picture of the activities of criminals along the Skid Row of their city than they did for most of the other groups of men. The following composite description necessarily applies fully to no one city, and also omits aspects of the Skid Rows of particular cities that are thought to be due to special circumstances rather than to the Skid Row environment as such.

1. Jackrollers and pickpockets find easy victims here. — Because a high proportion of the full-time residents of Skid Row are elderly men or heavy drinkers, they are easy prey for jackrollers. The typical jackroller is a younger man who will lead or drag his victim into a darkened doorway or alley to rob him — frequently administering an unnecessarily brutal kicking and beating in the process. It is quite common for the victim of the jackroller to lose teeth as well as money, and for him to require hospitalization to treat broken ribs, and other bones, a gashed face or other injuries. Some of the unsolved murders along Skid Row are simply cases of jackrolling where a blow over the head with a bottle or some other brutality killed the victim. In some cities they occur so routinely that they are recorded on the death certificates as "accidents" instead of murders, it is said, in order to keep down the crime rate and the unsolved murder rate. One resource person said of the jackroller, "The viciousness of these men is unbelievable. They are man at his lowest — exploiting the poorest creatures this community has."

The pickpocket is also reported to use Skid Row as a hangout — sometimes locating in taverns where he can lift the wallets of customers who have become intoxicated.

Often these criminals act according to carefully laid plans based on a thorough study of the habits of the men they rob. They know when pension checks are due for particular men, or when men who frequent particular taverns are paid, and arrange to waylay them. There are a number of tricks for gaining access to cubicles while the occupants are away, and hotels have much difficulty in preventing them from being used successfully. Many resource people commented on the vicious-

ness and frequency of this type of crime along Skid Row.

It was reported that it is very difficult to obtain legal evidence that a man is a jackroller. The criminal may be simply a bum who mixes with his cronies until they become inebriated while he remains sober, and then maneuvers the one with the most money and the least resistance into an alley to do his work. There usually is no witness. Even if the victim recognizes his assailant, he often does not identify him at the police station and refuses to press charges, because he fears a terrible beating later.

Jackrollers and pickpockets also prey on visitors to Skid Row. Skid Rows are adventure lands for some working men and even for "white collar" workers who live in other neighborhoods, who occasionally come here for an evening of drinking on a week-end or payday. If there is a large conference or convention in the city, almost inevitably a few delegates will lose wallets as a result of going to Skid Row for an adventure.

One of the most serious financial problems the old pensioner or workingman on Skid Row has is simply that of cashing his check in privacy and protecting his small funds from thieves. The old man in the cubicle hotel who leaves his door open while he goes to the toilet or who falls asleep in his chair while he watches TV in the hotel lobby may lose his month's sustenance, or his clothes or shoes, to the jackroller. If such a thing occurs in the depths of winter it can lead to death. The jackroller's victim who is left without funds loses his room and is forced to sleep on floors in missions, underneath bridges, or in parked trucks or boxcars. He is able to get only a meager meal of soup and bread at a mission once or twice a day. Under these circumstances he can become seriously ill and die. It is their fear of the jackroller that causes older men on Skid Row to avoid conversation with younger men. It also helps explain why the person who drinks sparingly or stays sober in the taverns may be looked upon with suspicion.

2. Skid Row is a good place to hide from the police. — Unless he is exceptionally "hot" and the police are making an all-out effort to apprehend him, Skid Row is a very good place for a criminal to "get lost" temporarily. Skid Rowers do not ask questions and they do not talk much to the police. The criminal hiding out finds all of his necessities (food, lodging, recreation, rendezvous with friends) easily arranged without having to venture into dangerous territory. Since new faces are always arriving, the appearance on Skid Row of a stranger who is running from the police creates little comment and arouses few suspicions. Many men on the street are unshaven and need haircuts, so that by neglecting his beard a criminal can alter his usual appearance a great deal without looking bizarre. High density and sheer numbers of men make it easy to hide. On Skid Row a criminal can register under any

THE SOUP LINE BEING FORMED AT SALVATION ARMY'S HARBOR LIGHT CENTER

THE LINE EXTENDS ACROSS THE NORTHWEST EXPRESSWAY VIADUCT. BECAUSE SOUPLINES ARE UNSIGHTLY, THE CITY NOW FORBIDS THEM AND THE MEN WAIT INSIDE IN THE CHAPEL

name and be accepted. If he were to rent a room in a residential area he probably would need to explain himself to a landlady, and to the other roomers and possibly their friends and neighbors. The criminal who is short of cash welcomes the cheap living conditions on Skid Row, and can even take spot jobs to keep going.

However, it is reported that usually it is only petty criminals who flee to Skid Row to hide out or who live on Skid Row and use it as a regular base of operations. The major criminals seem to find Skid Row too uncomfortable and too disagreeable. One resource person said, "No self-respecting criminal is losing time here," and another reported that it is the "unsuccessful criminal" who hides here.

3. Skid Rows are said to be the bases of operations for certain petty rackets and other illegal enterprises. — It is reported that Skid Row residents, although too poor to be regular dope addicts, gamblers, or patrons of high class places of prostitution, have interests in these areas. Dope peddlers sell "goof balls," a cheap narcotic that costs only a quarter or half a dollar. In many cities, it is possible to "make policy" and "numbers" for about the same amounts, and make small bets on horse races; it is said that Negroes and Puerto Ricans are especially good customers of these rackets. The prostitution which exists is said to be of a very cheap variety: the Skid Row "market" offers little economic attraction to organized prostitution because many of the men there are old, their prolonged use of alcohol has lessened their sexual appetite, and few of them can afford to pay a prostitute. However, in some cities Skid Row or its immediate fringes provides a tolerant site for a "red light district" whose customers live throughout the city.

The petty rackets that are devised especially for the Skid Row men may have an extremely serious effect. They drain off precious quarters and dollars that should be spent either on food or lodging to stay alive and well.

Because there is no social organization here which might combat the infiltration of crime, Skid Row in some cities is a suitable location for larger criminal operations whose organizers live in other areas. With no participation in law enforcement from the Skid Row residents (and often with their active or passive resistance), the control of crime is entirely a matter for the police. In view of this situation, it may be surprising that criminals are reported as being so small a fraction of the Skid Row population.

## F. WHY DO CHRONIC ALCOHOLICS LIVE ON SKID ROW?

As has been previously noted, this survey of resource persons tried to differentiate three major phases or types of chronic alcoholism. Most

of the resource persons, however, preferred to discuss the problem of alcoholism in general and then to add supplementary comments about mental health in relation to alcoholism. Their preference in this respect is reflected in the following presentation of their ideas.

### Factors Applicable to All Alcoholics

1. The alcoholism of Skid Row is not different from alcoholism in general, and Skid Row alcoholics are not on Skid Row because they are afflicted with a special kind of alcoholism. — In discussing the problem of chronic alcoholism on Skid Row, many resource persons emphasized that alcoholism is prevalent among all strata of society and that the Skid Row alcoholic is not an alcoholic with different symptoms or different underlying factors, but is either (1) an alcoholic with a lower level of income, a work history of unskilled or semi-skilled labor, and the social background of a workingman, or (2) an alcoholic from any stratum of society who is in the most advanced stages of drinking, without a family or other sponsor to care for him and "keep him off the bottom." These resource persons were generally in agreement that alcoholics come to Skid Row because in other areas they would find a total social and economic situation in which they could not survive. The reasons for their being here are therefore economic and social rather than medical or psychological.

2. Skid Row alcoholics usually cannot afford to live elsewhere. — A great many of the chronic alcoholics who live on Skid Row are "down and out" financially. They live from week-to-week, day-to-day, or even meal-to-meal. Their drinking has progressed to a point where they can command only the poorest jobs, and they cannot hold a given job more than a few days because of failure to report for work or drinking on the job. Older retired men who are chronic alcoholics must purchase liquor from the meager pension checks they receive. The cheap lodging, cheap food, and cheap liquor of Skid Row provide the only situation in the metropolis where the low income chronic alcoholic can subsist and continue to drink. Many resource persons pointed out the fact that "landing on Skid Row" has a strong economic element. The chronic alcoholic with an adequate and assured income or assured care has a choice of places to go, but the low income chronic alcoholic who must support himself has no alternative economic choice. He must either gravitate to Skid Row or give up drinking. Stated in another way, a high proportion of the chronic alcoholics on Skid Row have relinquished all the occupational and professional skills and earning power they may once have had because of their inability to regulate their drinking.

3. These men have been rejected by normal society. — Many of the chronic alcoholics who arrive on Skid Row leave behind a family and a

community that no longer care. After repeated episodes of drunkenness in which the family is embarrassed, robbed of essential income, subjected to humiliating pity and other indignities by friends and neighbors, the family of the chronic alcoholic may give up in despair. For the family, each of the episodes of drunkenness probably creates the rather unsavory task of caring for the man during the stage of stupor and physical illness, the necessity of nursing him through the hangover, of sharing his feelings of remorse and self-hatred that culminate in new plans to stop drinking (all of which end in failure). Finally, as the episodes become more and more frequent, disgusting and emotionally taxing, the family may exhaust its patience. Its sympathy may turn to revulsion and resentment.

If the man holds a steady job, at some stage of his drinking he may be fired. He then goes from job to job, gradually descending the occupational and wage ladder. As his drinking gets worse and worse, employers cease to recommend him or to excuse his drinking, and fewer bosses are willing to give him "one more chance." Finally, he is unable to obtain employment that is even remotely connected with his initial occupation. These events are usually paralleled by a loss of respect and esteem by nonalcoholic friends and acquaintances, so that finally the person is written off as a "hopeless case." Even the neighborhood taverns and bars where the man has purchased his drinks may refuse to serve him because his behavior offends other patrons and his presence hurts their business. Once the stage of total rejection is reached, the chronic alcoholic can make no satisfactory social adjustment in a normal neighborhood. The only kinds of social responses he can elicit from others are pity, disgust, fear, condescension, or formal coldness. Social workers trying to help a Skid Row alcoholic by contacting his family not infrequently discover that the family has no interest in the person and does not want to help — the bridges have all been burned, and the family acts as if the man were deceased, mourned, and a part of the past.

4. Many of these men have withdrawn from society and are seeking to escape from reality. — As the chronic alcoholic loses his fight with drinking, he is not unaware of the troubles he is creating or of his changed social position; yet he seems to be powerless to alter his course. In many cases his separation from family and community and his flight to Skid Row are precipitated not by an outright rejection, but by a voluntary withdrawal from society and an effort to flee from his problems. He may feel that he has brought such shame and disgrace upon his family that by banishing himself to Skid Row he will permit them to forget him and resume a happier life. Sometimes this is accompanied by a conscious or unconscious program of self-punishment: by going to Skid Row the alcoholic sentences himself to a justly de-

served punishment. (Some resource persons observed that after a few weeks on Skid Row these self-punishers sometimes wander back into their homes in a most disreputable condition in order to show the family how thoroughly they are suffering and atoning for their wrongs.)

Sometimes the withdrawal is hastened by the treatment of the community. The alcoholic may feel that the entire world is critical of him, and that by coming to Skid Row he can end this critical reaction. Resource persons stated that some alcoholics have told them that they were unable to tolerate the excessive kindness, the sympathy and pity, and the polite tolerance of them as sick persons, that friends and neighbors expressed. All this leads to an urge to flee — to get away from people who know them and the things they have done. Some of the alcoholics on Skid Row are ugly, misshapen or handicapped by nature or by accidents. Many of these have become discouraged at the discrimination and avoidance reactions from the public, and have retreated to Skid Row where physical appearance is secondary in importance, and where they can drink to ease their problems.

Once on Skid Row the alcoholic may continue his flight from reality by drowning his problems in drinking. This only causes the "merry-go-round of alcoholism" to go faster: the more he drinks, the more problems he creates that make him drink harder, which creates more problems. It becomes harder to get even spot jobs, and his health begins to deteriorate. As his situation appears more and more hopeless, it becomes a very painful experience for the chronic alcoholic to be sober and face the problems of living. "Drinking to forget" and to escape the real world is said to be a major reason for drinking on Skid Row — eventually, if not at the outset.

5. Skid Row provides the chronic alcoholic with the tolerance, acceptance, and consideration he can no longer get from the larger community. — On Skid Row the chronic alcoholic finds that his situation is shared by a very large segment of the population. Instead of standing out as a highly deviant and undesirable character, he is able to mingle inconspicuously and compatibly with others like himself. If he avoids the missions, there are few group pressures to discourage his drinking, to make him feel guilty, or to remind him that he has fled from reality. He is not singled out for criticism, pity, or other special attention. In the taverns he is given service, and he can drink when it pleases him without being disturbed. The police do not pick him up unless he is so drunk that he is unable to care for himself or to protect himself from jackrollers, or unless he is creating a disturbance or breaking the law by loitering with a bottle gang. On all sides there is understanding, tolerance, and appreciation of life as seen by the alcoholic. The alcoholic is accepted as a respectable person, without moral condemnation. He is not looked down on by his fellows, and he

is able to enjoy the companionship of others of similar habits.

Skid Row alcoholics are said to look out for each other, and to form friendships and mutual aid associations such as those described above for bums. Partners in these groups will share a bottle with other members who have none; they will watch out for those who are drunk in order to keep them from being picked up by the police or falling prey to the jackroller. They tell each other their troubles, believe each other's stories of their past greatness, and give each other sympathy and moral justification for their drinking careers. In short, on Skid Row they find the fellowship, social participation, and goodwill that no other community will extend to them.

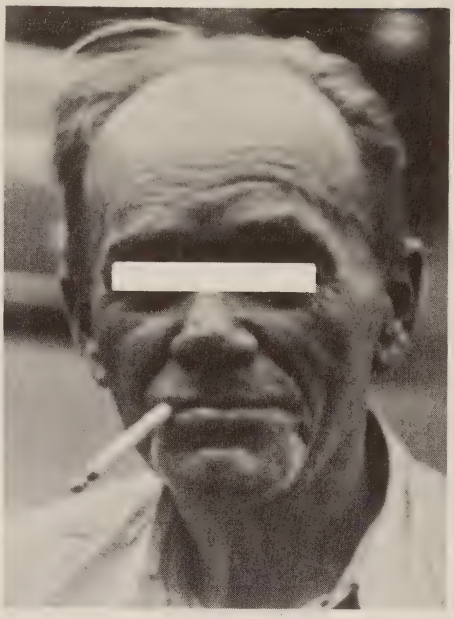
6. Skid Row is the last hope of the down-and-out alcoholic. — The alcoholic who has spent the goodwill of family, employers, friends, and the community at large has only one hope left for survival and eventual rehabilitation — Skid Row. He has no money to pay for treatments at a clinic to relieve his alcoholism. He may have pawned everything of value he owns at a Skid Row pawn shop. He may be so weakened by drinking and malnutrition that he can no longer get or hold enough spot jobs to earn his living. Even under these conditions he can continue to get by on Skid Row, after a fashion. He can eat (and probably sleep) at a mission without charge, or for a very small fee, and can beg drinks from the workingmen in the taverns and in the hotels. Skid Row workingmen do feel pity, and one of the things that will move them to charity is the sight of a man with "the shakes" but no money for a drink. It is often said that on Skid Row a man begging for food would starve, but a man begging for liquor could stay drunk indefinitely.

Although the life of an alcoholic with zero income is a very miserable existence, on Skid Row it is possible to survive under these conditions — at least temporarily. In fact, this is the situation into which many chronic alcoholics descend just before they die. One resource person said, "There is only one place left after Skid Row — the river."

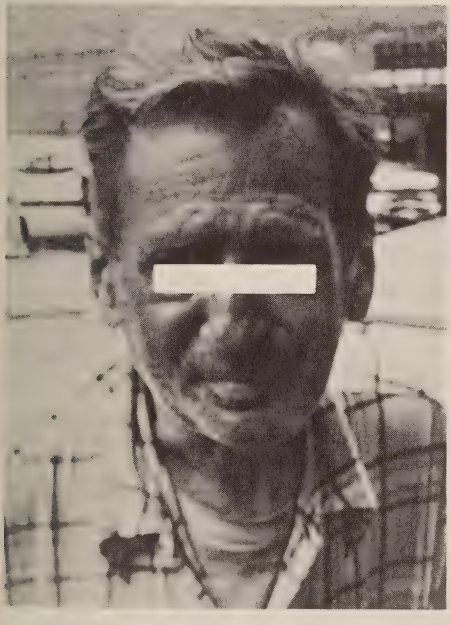
The Skid Row missions that continue to feed, clothe, and house these men are continually offering them the opportunity to try to rehabilitate themselves. Thus, as our society is now constituted, the facilities of Skid Row are not only the chronic alcoholic's last means of livelihood; they are also his last chance to recover. Not a few of the ex-alcoholics from Skid Row made their comeback after having been picked up from the street and taken to the charity ward of the hospital or to a mission, and nursed back to health, then counseled and rehabilitated under the guidance and sponsorship of these institutions.

7. Some of the men on Skid Row are here to get help to control their drinking. — The Salvation Army and each of several other of the missions on Skid Row have programs for alcoholics. This involves counseling, medical treatment and assistance in obtaining permanent work,

ITALIAN IMMIGRANT WHO DID NOT MAKE GOOD. HE IS NOT A DRINKER



WHY IS HE HERE?



WHY IS HE HERE?

AN ELDERLY PENSIONER

in addition to religious instruction. Alcoholics Anonymous has chapters that meet in the vicinity of Skid Row, and Skid Row alcoholics are welcome at the meetings. Some alcoholics who want to control their drinking but have been unsuccessful voluntarily come to Skid Row and seek the help of one of these agencies. Such persons do not live the life of Skid Row, but are more or less secluded in one of the missions. The number of "white collar" alcoholics on Skid Row is not numerous, but quite a few of the ones who do arrive here come actively seeking help rather than with the intention of furthering their careers as alcoholics. It is reported to be a common belief among the men on the street that the mission programs can do as much to cure alcoholism as any of the medical or other programs carried out by alcoholism clinics. Most alcoholics are said to possess knowledge of cures effected by the missions, and the number of voluntary commitments is increased by the reputation the missions have developed.

### Special Factors Applicable to Alcoholics Who Are Physically Rehabilitable but Who Have Serious Mental Illness

1. Some alcoholics on Skid Row are psychotics who have escaped here from normal society. — Because the community is tolerant, generous, and puts no pressure on the person, it is possible for a psychotic individual to get by on Skid Row while suffering from mental illnesses that would soon result in complete breakdown in normal society. More or less steady drinking is a mechanism by which many of these persons relieve tensions and avoid letting their personality problems drive them into more extreme forms of behavior. On Skid Row their inadequacies are not revealed or forced upon them, so that they feel much less threatened than they otherwise would. It is doubtful that these persons are here because they are psychotic; it is more probable that alcoholism combined with serious mental illness causes a more rapid descent and a more complete loss of family and other contacts, so that many such cases gravitate to Skid Row by the processes described above.

2. Prolonged drinking may result in deterioration of the central nervous system, and many Skid Row habitues arrived here as a direct consequence of such deterioration. — None of the resource persons reported a belief that alcoholism as such causes psychoses — at least none of the regular types of mental illness such as schizophrenia. But several did state that they believe prolonged drinking tends to lead to deterioration of the central nervous system. Speech may become permanently incoherent, there may be blindness and a loss of reasoning powers. In reporting these opinions, it was often stated that it is difficult to declare whether these changes are the direct consequences

of alcohol or the indirect consequences of prolonged malnutrition or organic failure. Whatever the origin of this deterioration, it was evident to some observers that the arrival of some alcoholics on Skid Row is related to this deterioration. It may have been an important factor in the loss of job or social contact which in turn brought departure from the home community and resettlement on Skid Row. This type of deterioration may induce the migratory worker who has been a heavy drinker to settle permanently on some Skid Row. Drinking-induced mental disability, if acquired on Skid Row, tends to make the possibility of eventual cure even more remote.

## SUMMARY AND EVALUATION

Resource persons agree that there are at least six different types of homeless men on Skid Row. They believe that each type comes here for a different set of reasons, but that there is much overlapping from one type of homeless man to another. Table 2-1 is a complete classification of all the reasons given for any group being on Skid Row, with an indication of the groups of homeless men to which each reason applies. Ignoring the reasons pertaining to the small group of criminals, there remain eleven leading reasons for living on Skid Row that affect all groups of homeless men:

1. Cheap lodging and food
2. Employment opportunities for laborers
3. Tolerance for deviant and unusual persons
4. Rejection by family and local community
5. Withdrawal from society
6. Companionship and association with others of same group
7. Welfare activities of missions and other agencies
8. Opportunities and facilities for unlimited and cheap drinking
9. Secondary importance of dress and physical appearance
10. Low standard of living – men aspire to nothing better
11. Tolerance of homosexuals

These are the common denominators of Skid Row as seen by resource persons.

In addition, each of the groups has one or more special reasons not shared by all other groups. Seven of these affected at least three of the groups of Skid Row residents, and hence have been listed in the table as "Other Major Reasons":

12. No other place to go
13. Sent here by social agencies to save money
14. Mutual aid among the residents
15. Desire for anonymity
16. Less police trouble; good hideout

Table 2-1. SUMMARY OF REASONS WHY HOMELESS MEN OF EACH TYPE LIVE ON SKID ROW

| Reasons for living on Skid Row | Types of homeless men | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Elderly and disabled | Semi-settled working men | Migratory workers | Transient bums | Resident bums | Criminals | Chronic alcoholics |
| "COMMON DENOMINATOR" REASONS | | | | | | | |
| Cheap lodging and food | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Employment opportunities for laborers | X | X | X | X | X | - | X |
| Tolerance for deviant and unusual persons | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Rejection by other communities as a social outcast | X | X | X | X | X | - | X |
| Withdrawal from society as a social misfit | X | X | X | X | X | - | X |
| Companionship and association with others of same group | X | X | X | X | X | - | X |
| Welfare activities of missions and other agencies | X | X | X | X | X | - | X |
| Opportunities and facilities for unlimited and cheap drinking | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Secondary importance of dress and physical appearance | X | X | X | X | X | X | X |
| Low standards of living--men aspire to nothing better | X | X | X | X | X | - | X |
| Tolerance of homosexuals | X | X | X | X | X | - | X |
| OTHER MAJOR REASONS | | | | | | | |
| No other place to go | X | - | X | X | X | - | X |
| Sent here by social agencies to save money | X | - | X | X | - | - | X |
| Mutual aid among the residents | - | - | X | X | X | - | X |
| Desire for anonymity | - | X | X | - | - | X | X |
| Less police trouble; good hideout | - | - | - | X | - | X | X |
| Communications center for workingmen and transients | - | X | X | X | - | - | - |
| Accessibility to rest of city | X | X | - | X | X | - | - |
| MINOR REASONS | | | | | | | |
| Neglect by families | X | - | - | - | - | - | X |
| Easy to rob other residents | - | - | - | - | - | X | - |
| Base of operations for rackets | - | - | - | - | - | X | - |

17. Communications center for workingmen and transients
18. Accessibility to rest of city

Together these 18 factors "explain" the presence of Skid Row and why it attracts homeless men of the various types.

Three additional reasons listed on the table as the "Minor Reasons" are special factors that affect only one or two groups.

The preceding analysis leaves certain fundamental questions unanswered. (a) It is evident that not every homeless man of a given type is affected by all of the factors listed for that type. What is the comparative importance of each factor for each type of homeless man? (b) These factors are derived from the informal observations of experts, and are subject to errors of sampling bias; most of the observers come into intimate contact with only a limited and highly selected aspect of Skid Row, and hence tend to see it from a particular (and hence biased) perspective. Does the procedure of reporting all responses, relying on each type of bias to round out one aspect of the picture (a procedure followed in this report) really provide a reliable and complete picture? (c) On many points the experts disagree. Which view is right and which is mistaken? (d) Much information is missing concerning the details of the conditions that exist and the reactions of the men to their situation. What are these details? These unanswered questions will be illuminated in succeeding chapters by an analysis of the responses to the interview with a representative cross-section of the homeless men themselves on Chicago's Skid Row.

*Chapter 3*

## *AN INTRODUCTION TO CHICAGO'S SKID ROWS— SURVEY RESULTS*

Even expert and long-time observers of Skid Rows in Chicago confess they cannot say reliably what kinds of men and how many of each kind live on Skid Row. The mission worker, the social worker, the tavern keeper, the policeman, the judge who sentences Skid Row men who have been arrested, or the labor contractor — each sees only a biased fragment. If one walks along a Skid Row street in the daytime, he notes only the dozens of idle men loafing in small clusters, drifting along the street, or leaning as solitary spectators against the buildings; he does not see those men who are at work. At night, a tour of the crowded taverns could give the impression that only heavy drinkers live here — unless it is counterbalanced by information concerning those who are sober and asleep in their cubicles, who are watching TV, visiting friends, playing cards in hotel lobbies, or attending mission services or meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous. The question, "How many of each kind?" is one that can be answered only by taking a sample census, that is, by interviewing a representative cross-section of the residents and getting from each one information which can help paint a composite picture when compiled.

Such a sample survey was made on Chicago's Skid Rows between December 22, 1957, and April 1, 1958. A total of 613 men were interviewed by carefully selected, trained, and tested interviewers. Men to be interviewed were selected on the basis of probability sampling in accordance with a predetermined sampling plan that was designed to give results that would represent an unbiased cross-section of each of Chicago's four major Skid Row areas. The questions asked in the interview covered the many aspects of the present situation and life history of the men that were hypothesized as having a bearing on their now being on Skid Row.

A copy of this interview is contained in Appendix A. The reader is requested at least to peruse this Appendix, because it will give him a better perspective on the survey results. It should be reported here that the degree of cooperation and apparent honesty in answering questions surpassed all expectations. The residents of these areas responded with amazing frankness, both with respect to themselves and

with respect to conditions of their lives. Since each of the Skid Row areas has a very active "grapevine," news of the study traveled fast. The men correctly interpreted the purpose of the survey as one of objective fact-finding in an effort to understand how they got to this place and what might be done to help them. The resulting body of information is thought to be of a higher and more dependable quality, with less falsification and distortion, than has previously been assembled for this type of respondent. However, as Appendix A points out in detail, this information is only the subjective self-reporting of a complex and emotion-laden set of experiences, and must be analyzed as such.

## I. PHYSICAL ASPECTS OF CHICAGO'S SKID ROWS

Chicago's Skid Rows: Definition and Location. — It is impossible to establish a definition of Skid Row communities that will permit their clear-cut delineation. How, for example, does one differentiate between a slum and a Skid Row? Or between a rooming house area inhabited predominantly by workingmen and a Skid Row where many residents live in rooming houses? The definition used for the sample census of Skid Row residents was as follows: all cubicle-type hotels and all missions which serve homeless men or low-income chronic alcoholics are to be included, as well as all rooming houses and hotels with rooms where (a) the rent per night is less than $2.00 (or $12.00 per week), (b) more than three-fourths of the residents are men, and (c) the neighborhood has the general Skid Row characteristics — with employment offices for unskilled labor, many taverns, barber colleges, cheap clothing stores, missions, and second-hand stores.

At least five areas in Chicago qualify under this definition:

1. West Madison Street, from Canal to about 1200 West;
2. South State Street from the Loop to 1100 South, with a single cubicle hotel being located in the 3600 block on South State;
3. North Clark Street from the Loop to Chicago Avenue;
4. An "L" shaped area along South Clark Street from the Loop to 600 South and along Van Buren Street between State and Clark;
5. A small area near Wilson and Broadway, with a single cubicle hotel and a hotel with rooms catering exclusively to men.

Newer Skid Row type developments are emerging along Sixty-third Street, along Halsted Street extending south from Madison, and along Madison Street west of the 1200 block. They were not included in this survey because, in every case, they are inextricably intermingled with a slum-family situation.

Number of Homeless Men in Skid Row Areas. — A careful estimate was made of the homeless man population of the five Skid Row Areas. This was done as the first step of the sampling procedure. Each of the

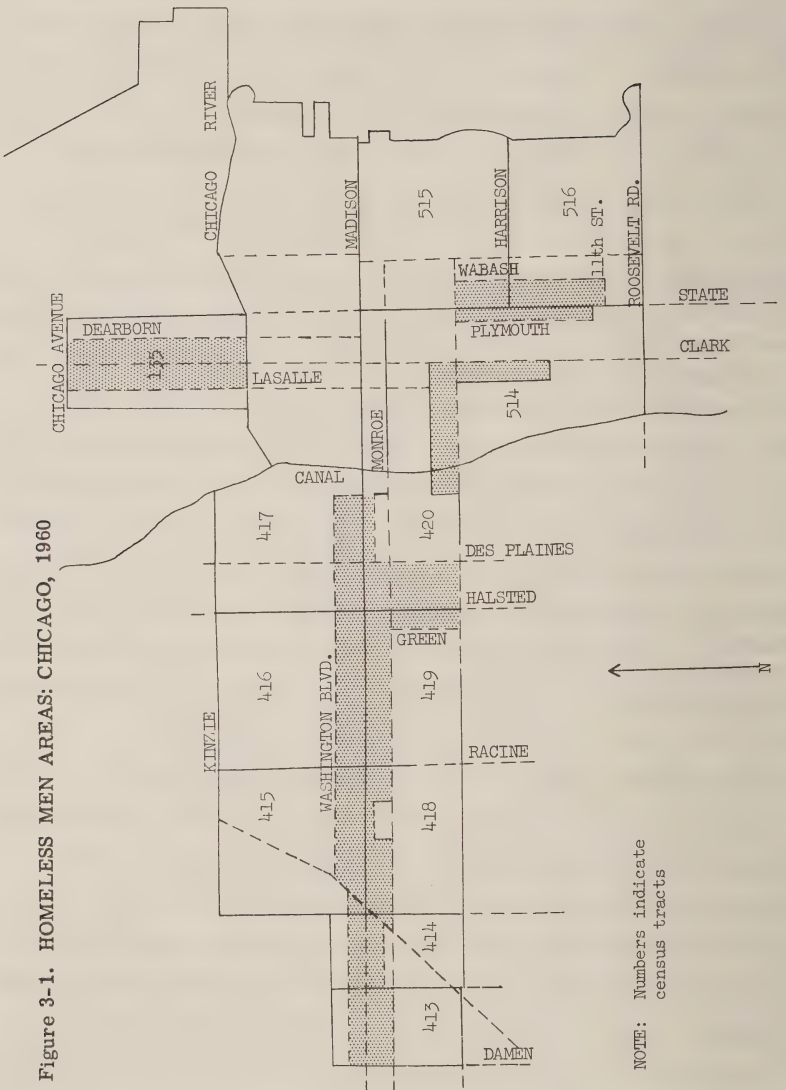
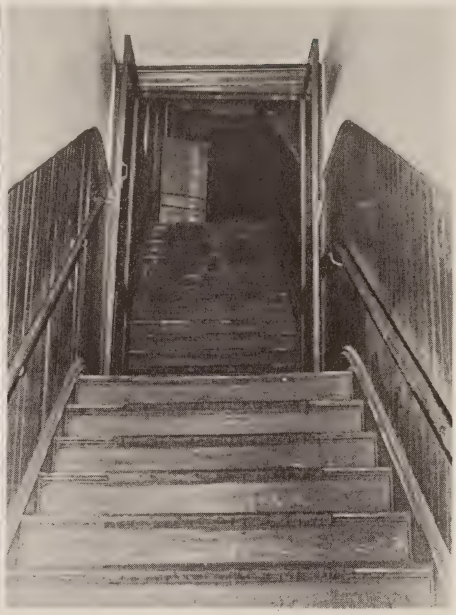



Figure 3-1. HOMELESS MEN AREAS: CHICAGO, 1960

LET'S VISIT A CUBICLE HOTEL



WE GO UP A LONG WOODEN STAIRWAY

WE RENT A ROOM. (NOT SAME HOTEL AS PRECEDING PICTURE)

hotels and rooming houses, missions, and other places in which these men live was canvassed, and a record was made of the number of sleeping spaces (beds) available for these men. Data concerning the number of beds occupied and vacant at the time of the canvass (winter, 1957-1958) were also collected. The homeless man population was obtained by simply adding the occupancy figures for each of the places. Because at any one time many of these men are in the House of Correction or in Cook County Hospital, a canvass was made of each of these institutions, similar to that for lodging places. Finally, from discussions with persons familiar with the area, an estimate was made of the number of men who sleep in boxcars, under bridges, and in doorways, or who "carry the banner" (walk the streets all night or lounge in restaurants and railway stations because they have no place to sleep).

The canvass yielded the following results:

| | Number of men | Percent of total |
|---|---|---|
| Total homeless men of Skid Rows in Chicago | 11,926 | 100.0 |
| West Madison Street Area . . . . . | 7,525 | 63.1 |
| South State Street Area . . . . . | 1,687 | 14.1 |
| South Clark and Van Buren Street Area . . | 1,223 | 10.3 |
| North Clark Street Area . . . . . | 691 | 5.8 |
| Wilson and Broadway, Other*. . . . . | 370 | 3.1 |
| Jails, Hospital, Sleeping out . . . . . | 430 | 3.6 |

*Includes missions that serve homeless men, but which are located outside the delineated Skid Row areas.

As will be explained below, this count is an understatement of the number of men, because smaller rooming houses were not canvassed in the North Clark Street or "other" areas. The correct number of homeless men living in Chicago under Skid Row conditions in the winter of 1957-1958 was probably between 12,500 and 13,000.

Types of Residences in Which Homeless Men Live. — More than two-thirds (67 percent) of the homeless men residents of Skid Row were found in cubicle-type hotels (see Table 3-1 and Figure 3-2). Hotels with single rooms housed 14 percent, while rooming houses provided accommodations for an additional 7 percent. Missions provided shelter for about one man in twelve, or 8 percent. About 3.5 percent were estimated to be in the Cook County Hospital, in the city jail, or sleeping out.

The cubicle-type hotels were divided into three classes:

Large — those with 300 cubicles or more
Medium — those with 200 to 300 cubicles
Small — those with fewer than 200 cubicles

A TYPICAL CUBICLE, 7 FEET LONG AND 5 FEET WIDE, 15 WATT BULB, CORRUGATED METAL WALLS, CHICKEN WIRE CEILING, ARMY COT

A CUBICLE IN A LESS FASTIDIOUS HOTEL. WITH QUARTERS LIKE THIS THE RESIDENTS ARE LITERALLY HOMELESS

Table 3-1. ESTIMATED NUMBER AND PERCENT DISTRIBUTION OF RESIDENTS ON CHICAGO'S SKID ROWS, BY TYPE OF RESIDENCE: WINTER, 1958

| Type of residence | Number of homeless men | Percent distribution |
|---|---|---|
| Total, all Skid Row areas.. | 11,926 | 100.0 |
| Living in cubicle hotels..... | 8,038 | 67.4 |
| Large (300 or more)..... | 4,624 | 38.8 |
| Medium-size (200-300)..... | 1,779 | 14.9 |
| Small (less than 200)..... | 1,635 | 13.7 |
| Living in hotels with rooms..... | 1,677 | 14.1 |
| Living in rooming houses..... | 806 | 6.8 |
| Living in missions..... | 975 | 8.2 |
| In Cook County Hospital..... | 150 | 1.3 |
| In House of Correction..... | 170 | 1.4 |
| Sleeping out..... | 110 | 0.9 |

The larger cubicle-type hotels are by far the major place of residence. There are 13 such hotels in Chicago. Although they make up less than 20 percent of the 70 men's hotels canvassed, they house almost 40 per-

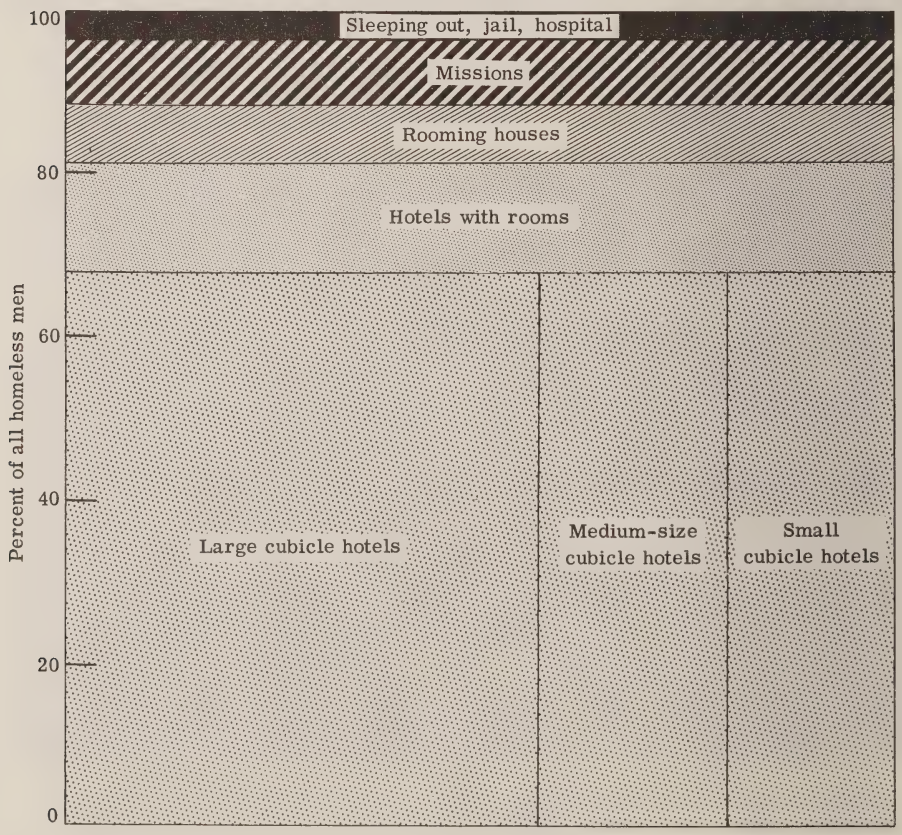
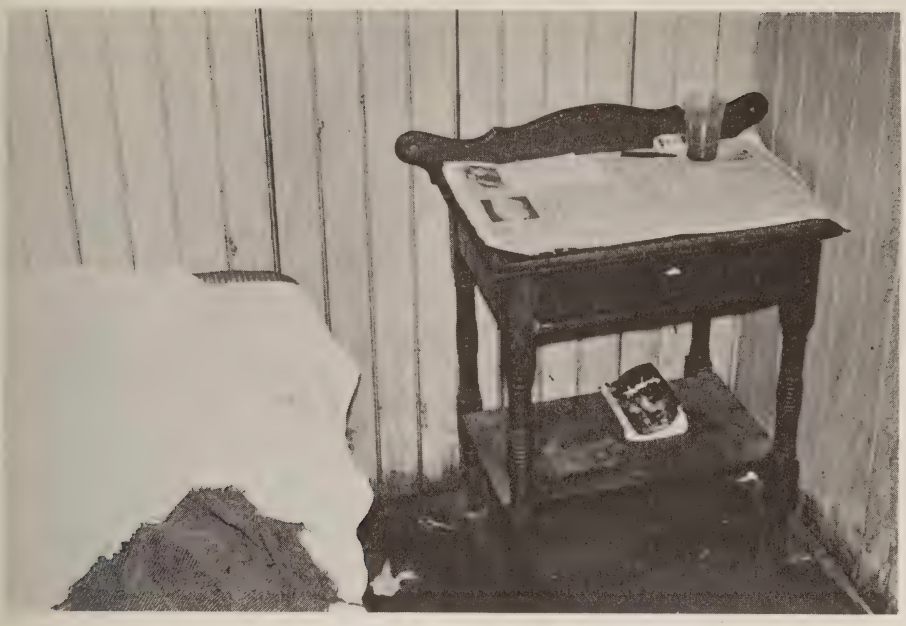



FIGURE 3-2. TYPE OF HOUSING OCCUPIED BY SKID ROW RESIDENTS: CHICAGO



AN ANTIQUE NIGHTSTAND, DATING BACK TO THE EARLY HOBO PERIOD. THIS CUBICLE LACKED THE USUAL GYMNASIUM LOCKER

THE MATTRESS: NO BEAUTY AND LITTLE REST. NOTE THE VOMIT MARKS ON THE WALLS. THIS WAS TAKEN IN ONE OF THE MORE POORLY OPERATED HOTELS AND THE PHOTOGRAPHER CONTRACTED BEDBUGS

cent of the men. The proportion of medium-sized cubicle hotels, small-sized cubicle hotels, and hotels with rooms, is about the same in each case — 13-15 percent of the total number of residences. All three combined, however, hold only another 40 percent of the men.

It must be emphasized that this survey focused primarily upon hotel dwellers and made a systematic effort to canvass every rooming house only in the West Madison and South State Street areas. For this reason, an unknown number of lodgers in private homes was omitted. From the results obtained in the canvass of rooming houses on West Madison Street it could be inferred that perhaps as many as 1,000 homeless men live in rooming houses elsewhere in the city under Skid Row conditions.

## II. THE SAMPLE AND FIELD WORK

A listing of all room numbers or bed numbers available for rent or free was obtained by calling on the management of each hotel, rooming house, mission or other place of Skid Row residence. This listing comprised the universe for sampling. A sample was drawn by taking every 15th bed (room) in the hotels and rooming houses and every 10th name in the missions. At the jail and Cook County Hospital, the complete roster of inmates was reviewed. Every 10th man committed from the Monroe Street Station and every 10th patient at the hospital with a Skid Row address were included in the sample. A quota of 10 men sleeping out was set to provide for those who were sleeping in doorways, under bridges, and so on, and most of them were interviewed as they came to the Reading Room to clean up. (Missions, the jail, and hospital were sampled at a greater rate in order to gain more precise data for the truly "down and out" population.[1])

As each hotel was taken up as a field assignment, the names of the men registered for the sample rooms or beds on the day interviewing began there were taken as the list of persons to be interviewed. Also included in the sample were all transients or new customers who rented one of the vacant sample sleeping spaces during a 24-hour period following the taking of the names from the register. Intensive efforts were made to interview as promptly as possible the men whose names comprised the sample. Most transient men were interviewed either on the day the sampling began or on the following morning. The hotel management usually was very cooperative in helping the interviewers determine which rooms were occupied by "regular customers" who could be counted on to be around for several days, and which were occupied by the comparative newcomers or transients. The more permanent residents were interviewed within the week following the drawing of the sample. The procedure was relaxed from strict probability sampling rules to permit the substitution of a few new transients, drawn at random, for transients who could not be contacted during the 24-hour

A DOORKNOB EVERY FIVE FEET IN CORRIDORS WHERE DAYLIGHT NEVER ENTERS

THIS HISTORIC OLD FLOP-HOUSE WAS CLOSED DURING THE SURVEY

THE SPITOON IS STILL IN VOGUE IN SOME SKID ROW HOTEL LOBBIES

period and who were lost through no fault of the interviewers who had no opportunity to face them, explain the purpose of the survey, and ask for an interview. All refusals and break-offs were counted as irreplaceable losses.

It was quickly discovered that it was out of the question to interview men in their cubicles. Cubicle walls "have ears," and the interview disturbed other men who were trying to sleep in the daytime. Also, some interviewers acquired bedbugs or lice by sitting on the bed or chair in the cubicle, so other arrangements were made. Small portable interviewing booths, made of collapsible screens such as are used in homes were set up in a remote corner of the hotel lobby. Where it was impossible to use the screens, interviews were taken in strict privacy, out of the earshot of other men, to the greatest extent permitted by the circumstances. Often the manager made his office available.

The interviewers were carefully selected, trained, and field-tested before they were given an assignment. Special projective devices were used to detect and screen out applicants who would be unsympathetic, moralistic, or self-conscious in conversing with these men. Throughout, their work was carefully followed and supervised. On an average, an interview lasted about 2 1/2 hours. It was found that at the conclusion of the interview, a high percentage of the men asked for money. Since the study was indebted to them for a gift of so much time, it was difficult to refuse. In order to standardize the handling of this situation, each man was told in advance that he would receive $1.50 for the time he devoted to giving the interview. At that time, he was assured that he would receive the money even if he refused to answer some questions he thought too personal, and that in all cases we wanted him to tell exactly what he thought and not to give us a "dressed up" story about himself.

In general, the materials from these interviews are thought to be a very good representation of what the homeless men of Skid Row think and believe about themselves and their situation. This, of course, does not always correspond exactly to reality because of their biases, inability to view themselves objectively, and lack of information about several aspects of their situations. Quite possibly, the data for this group are somewhat less valid and less precise than similar data gathered for a more educated, happier, and better adjusted family type of population would be. However, the interviewers were impressed throughout at the almost pathetic eagerness with which many men sought to make themselves and their problems understood and the apparently deep sincerity with which most of them spoke as they tried to explain their lives. They seemed to accept readily the idea that at last "somebody is going to try to do something about Skid Row." They seemed to believe the interviewers when they said that knowing the men's

A HOTEL OWNER'S CADILLAC PARKED IN THE REAR OF HIS ESTABLISHMENT

A FEW OF THE HOTELS HAVE NICE LOBBIES, WITH FACILITIES FOR WRITING, PLAYING CARDS, AND SITTING IN COMFORT

stories would aid in developing plans to help homeless men.

After the interviewing was completed, samples of interviews were studied and used to establish codes for converting the information into categories for statistical analysis. These codes represent a compromise between the nice theoretical distinctions it had been hoped could be made and the often broad and vague answers received.

## III. EXTENT OF PROBLEM DRINKING AND ALCOHOLIC DERELICTION ON SKID ROW

Obtaining a clear picture of the drinking behavior of homeless men and developing an understanding of the kinds of motives upon which their drinking is based are among the principal objectives of this study. Perhaps there is no more appropriate way to begin the analysis of the survey results than to classify the men according to their drinking behavior.

A Drinking Classification of the Homeless Men. — At a point in the middle of the interview, after rapport had been firmly established, each man was asked, "How heavy a drinker are you? Do you consider yourself to be a heavy drinker, a moderate drinker, a light drinker, a periodic drinker, or don't you drink at all?" It would have been naive to rely solely upon the responses of the men to this question as the basis for classifying them according to their drinking behavior. What is "light drinking" to one man may be "heavy drinking" to another. In addition to this question, several others were asked about drinking which, taken together, provided enough data to permit each person to be given a classification which we believe rather accurately fits his drinking behavior.

Each respondent was placed in one of the following five classes:

Teetotaler — a person who says he never drinks and for whom there is no evidence to controvert his claim, including the observations of the interviewer.

Light drinker — a person who says he is a light drinker and who spends less than 15 percent of his income on drinking, and who drank less than 3 pints of whisky (or equivalent) during the week preceding the interview. Also included are persons who say they are moderate drinkers, but who drank less than 2 pints during the preceding week and spend not more than 10 percent of their income on drinking.

Moderate drinker — a person who says he is a moderate drinker and who spends between 15 and 35 percent of his income on drinking and who drank not more than 5 pints of whisky (or equivalent) during the week preceding the interview. Also included are men who call themselves "light drinkers" but who spend 20 to 40 percent of their income on drinking, men who call themselves

"heavy drinkers" but who spend less than 20 percent of their income on drinking and drank less than 5 pints in the preceding week, or periodic drinkers whose spells of drinking are spaced 3 or more months apart and who spend less than 35 percent of their income on drinks.

Heavy drinker — a person who says he is a heavy drinker and who spends 25 percent or more of his income on drinking or who drank 6 or more pints of whisky (or equivalent) during the week preceding the interview; or who says he is a "light" or "moderate" drinker but spends 40 percent of his income on drinking and drank more than 5 pints of whisky (or equivalent) in the week preceding the interview.

Alcoholic derelict — a long-time heavy drinker who has sacrificed almost everything for drinking. These men qualify as heavy drinkers (as defined above) and, in addition, have been arrested at least 10 times for drunkenness (including once in the last 6 months), and who also are characterized by one of the following: (a) a health condition attributable to prolonged drinking, (b) D. T.'s one or more times, (c) 65 percent or more of their income spent on drinking, or (d) hospitalized one or more times as a result of drunkenness. If there was no record of jail or arrests, a heavy drinker was classified as an alcoholic derelict if he had 2 or more of the conditions listed above that did not refer to the same episode of drunkenness.

Table 3-2. AGE COMPOSITION OF CHICAGO'S SKID ROW RESIDENTS, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION: WINTER, 1957-58

| Age | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Age, total..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 20-29 years..... | 4.4 | 6.7 | 2.3 | 4.3 | 7.0 | 2.3 |
| 30-34 years..... | 5.8 | 3.9 | 4.5 | 5.3 | 7.6 | 9.3 |
| 35-39 years..... | 11.3 | 5.5 | 11.5 | 10.8 | 14.7 | 13.4 |
| 40-44 years..... | 12.4 | 5.1 | 7.2 | 16.0 | 17.9 | 17.1 |
| 45-49 years..... | 16.2 | 7.9 | 14.2 | 15.6 | 24.3 | 19.0 |
| 50-54 years..... | 13.2 | 9.1 | 13.6 | 11.7 | 13.2 | 20.4 |
| 55-59 years..... | 10.9 | 14.2 | 10.1 | 13.6 | 5.6 | 12.0 |
| 60-64 years..... | 8.3 | 11.0 | 13.8 | 5.0 | 5.3 | 3.7 |
| 65-69 years..... | 9.3 | 16.9 | 10.3 | 12.9 | 2.6 | 1.4 |
| 70 years and over | 8.2 | 19.7 | 12.7 | 4.8 | 1.8 | 1.4 |

In those cases where the combinations of characteristics did not give a clear-cut and internally consistent classification, the man was allocated to the group that fit his behavior most nearly on the basis of all information in the interview, including the observations of the interviewer. In other words, the classification was based on all information that could be obtained from a rather thorough probing of drinking be-

havior. This classification will be used throughout the remainder of the report. The proportion of the sample that fell in each category, and the number of homeless men on Chicago's Skid Rows implied by these proportions, are as follows:

| Drinking Classification | Percentage of men in the sample | Number of homeless men on Skid Row |
|---|---|---|
| Total. . . . . | 100.0 | 11,926 |
| Teetotalers. . . . . | 14.8 | 1,765 |
| Light drinkers . . . . . | 28.4 | 3,375 |
| Moderate drinkers . . . . . | 24.4 | 2,910 |
| Heavy drinkers. . . . . | 19.9 | 2,373 |
| Alcoholic derelicts. . . . . | 12.6 | 1,503 |

It is difficult to translate this pragmatic definition of drinking behavior into the conventional terminology usually employed by students of alcoholism. The correspondence intended when the classification was made is as follows:

Teetotalers — Nondrinkers
Light drinkers — Controlled drinkers
Moderate drinkers — Incipient and borderline alcoholics
Heavy drinkers — Chronic alcoholics, initial stage
Alcoholic derelicts — Chronic alcoholics, terminal stage

The groups of moderate drinkers really are "moderate" only by Skid Row standards; by the standards of the general public most of these men would be said to be drinking excessively. This intermediate group should be looked upon as a set of men who definitely have a drinking problem, by general standards, but who still maintain some curb on their drinking.

In a similar way, the "light drinker" on Skid Row is not necessarily a light drinker to the general public. A man who drinks 2 or 3 pints of whisky per week or spends 10-15 percent of his income for drink is probably exceeding the average consumption of the general drinking population. Yet, such men must be regarded as light drinkers in the Skid Row situation, as they have control over their drinking activities.

This finding that about one homeless man in seven is a complete teetotaler and that 40-45 percent of the Skid Row residents are "controlled drinkers" is highly significant for the remainder of the analysis in this study. It supports strongly the views of those resource persons who

maintained that a substantial number of persons live in Skid Row areas from economic necessity and for other reasons not related to drinking. It refutes those who have viewed Skid Row as solely a collection place for perennial drunks. Out of 12,000 men, only 1,500 are in the "alcoholic derelict" category.

Yet, it is abundantly clear that 30-35 percent of the men on Skid Row definitely fall in the "problem drinker" category. That 4,000 alcoholics, enough to populate a small city, are encamped on Skid Row and that 1,500 of them are so far "gone" in alcoholism as to be almost out of touch with reality and living with almost no objective other than that of procuring the next drink constitutes unmistakable evidence that this is a very serious problem.

A major theme throughout this book will be that Skid Row is not one little world apart from society, but two worlds. Homeless men tend to fall into one of two groups: those to whom drinking is at present the dominant activity in their lives, and those to whom drinking is only a pastime or a rejected form of behavior. (In between is a group which is sympathetic to both points of view, and whose members tend to call themselves "moderate" drinkers.) For this reason, the drinking classification will be used throughout this chapter and later chapters as a major dimension within which to examine other variables.

## IV. DISABILITY STATUS

The substantial proportion of Skid Row men who are suffering from physical handicaps that are disabling to some degree constitutes another leading characteristic of this population. In order to explore this problem, several questions were asked on health, recent illness and symptoms of illness, and handicaps. A physician resident on the staff of the University of Chicago's Billings Hospital read the responses to these questions and, on the basis of all information available to him, assigned each man to one of six categories denoting degrees of physical disability. (A later chapter, "Illness Among Homeless Men," explains in more detail this and other evaluations of health.) The estimate of disability is oriented solely toward the man's capacity to do physical labor of the type expected of operatives, service workers, and unskilled laborers. Only as it produced symptoms of ill health was any account taken of the man's drinking problem. The physician's classification, when tabulated, produced the following distribution of disability status of homeless men on Skid Row:

| Disability status | Percent of homeless men |
|---|---|
| Total | 100.0 |
| Too old to work | 8.8 |
| Unable to work | 1.5 |
| Severely handicapped | 9.4 |
| Moderately handicapped | 26.8 |
| Slightly handicapped | 25.1 |
| Not handicapped | 28.5 |

Physical handicaps are much more prevalent among the residents of Skid Row than among the general population. Seven out of each ten men on Skid Row are handicapped to such an extent that they have restricted capacity to hold a job requiring normal physical exertion as laborers or semi-skilled workers. One out of each ten men is either too old to work or is so severely ill or handicapped that he cannot work. From this it is quite clear that Skid Row is no longer (even if it once were) the labor pool of able-bodied manpower it has been reputed to be. Instead, it has the aspect of being a collecting place for unattached disabled laborers who make their services available to employers who will be content with a lower level of output or who will undertake to force a normal day's work out of bodies no longer normally capable of delivering it.

The extent of this disability should not be exaggerated, however. Only 10 percent of the men on Skid Row are incapable of doing at least some gainful work to help support themselves (those who are too old to work and those unable to work). Only an additional 10 percent are so severely handicapped that they need partial support, even when they are given highly "sheltered" employment at jobs they can perform. Assuming that the moderately handicapped men could be placed in moderately sheltered employment that would allow them to earn at least their minimum necessities and that the slightly handicapped men could be fully self-supporting with only a little assistance in finding a job suited to their capacities, then not less than 80 percent of the men on Skid Row could be completely self-supporting, if physical health were the limiting factor rather than drinking or other problems. The notion that Skid Row is populated predominantly by helpless cripples and men too sickly to be rehabilitated is just as false as the notion that it is an economically valuable manpower pool.

Disability and Drinking. — What is the relationship between disability and drinking? Are the heaviest drinkers the most disabled or the least disabled? These are very important questions, and worthy of careful

analysis. Table 3-3 and Figure 3-3 furnish information with which to study them. According to the table, disability and drinking are almost, but not quite, unrelated to each other. The men who control their drinking tend to fall at the extremes: either they are severely disabled (too old, unable to work) or not disabled at all. The "moderately handicapped" and "slightly handicapped" groups contain the highest percentages of alcoholic derelicts and heavy drinkers. The large group of men with no disabilities has a disproportionately large share of teetotalers and light drinkers, but it also contains a substantial number of heavy drinkers.

The bottom panel of Table 3-3 compares the actual cross-classification of disability and drinking with a theoretical distribution in which they would be randomly distributed with respect to each other. From this table, one could conclude that for only about 4 percent of the homeless men could disability have led to above-average drinking; actually, above-average drinking may have created this amount of disability. While these differences are statistically significant and worthy of consideration, they should not be over-dramatized. On the one hand, they

Table 3-3. DISABILITY STATUS AND DRINKING CLASSIFICATION OF HOMELESS MEN, CHICAGO: WINTER, 1957-58

| Disability status | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Distribution by drinking classification, total | 100.0 | 14.8 | 28.4 | 24.4 | 19.9 | 12.6 |
| Unable to work | 100.0 | 36.0 | 24.0 | 12.0 | 20.0 | 8.0 |
| Severely handicapped | 100.0 | 18.0 | 29.2 | 26.1 | 13.7 | 13.0 |
| Moderately handicapped | 100.0 | 12.6 | 25.4 | 22.0 | 22.4 | 17.6 |
| Slightly handicapped | 100.0 | 7.2 | 24.2 | 30.7 | 23.5 | 14.4 |
| Not handicapped | 100.0 | 14.9 | 30.9 | 23.9 | 21.3 | 9.0 |
| Too old to work | 100.0 | 35.8 | 41.1 | 15.2 | 4.0 | 4.0 |
| Distribution by disability status, total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Unable to work | 1.5 | 3.5 | 1.2 | 0.7 | 1.5 | 0.9 |
| Severely handicapped | 9.4 | 11.4 | 9.7 | 10.0 | 6.5 | 9.7 |
| Moderately handicapped | 26.8 | 22.8 | 24.0 | 24.2 | 30.2 | 37.5 |
| Slightly handicapped | 25.1 | 12.2 | 21.4 | 31.6 | 29.6 | 28.7 |
| Not handicapped | 28.5 | 28.7 | 31.0 | 28.0 | 30.5 | 20.4 |
| Too old to work | 8.8 | 21.3 | 12.7 | 5.5 | 1.8 | 2.8 |
| Distribution by both variables, total | 100.0 | 14.8 | 28.4 | 24.4 | 19.9 | 12.6 |
| Unable to work | 1.5 | 0.5 | 0.3 | 0.2 | 0.3 | 0.1 |
| Severely handicapped | 8.4 | 1.7 | 2.7 | 2.4 | 1.3 | 1.2 |
| Moderately handicapped | 26.8 | 3.4 | 6.8 | 5.9 | 6.0 | 4.7 |
| Slightly handicapped | 25.1 | 1.8 | 6.1 | 7.7 | 5.9 | 3.6 |
| Not handicapped | 28.5 | 4.3 | 8.8 | 6.8 | 6.1 | 2.6 |
| Too old to work | 8.8 | 3.1 | 3.6 | 1.3 | 0.3 | 0.3 |
| Comparison of actual with theoretical distribution, total | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Unable to work | ... | 0.3 | -0.1 | -0.2 | ... | -0.1 |
| Severely handicapped | ... | 0.5 | ... | 0.1 | 0.6 | ... |
| Moderately handicapped | ... | -0.6 | -0.8 | -0.6 | 0.7 | 1.3 |
| Slightly handicapped | ... | -1.9 | -1.0 | 1.6 | 0.9 | 0.4 |
| Not handicapped | ... | 0.1 | 0.7 | -0.2 | 0.4 | -1.0 |
| Too old to work | ... | 1.8 | 1.1 | -0.8 | -1.5 | -0.8 |

support in still another way the contention that there are many men on Skid Row who are there for economic reasons — primarily because of severe disability or old age. The disproportionately large share of teetotalers and light drinkers among the most severely disabled suggests that this is true. On the other hand, they lend some support to a theory that drinking is one way that partially disabled men sometimes take to escape the disappointments of being unable to really "make good."

If we were to simplify Table 3-3 to its fundamentals, we could conclude that all Skid Row men could be grouped into four categories of drinking and disability:

| Men whose drinking problem is: | Men whose disability problem is: | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|---|
| Total | | 100.0 |
| Serious | Serious | 3.5 |
| Serious | Moderate | 10.7 |
| Serious | Light | 18.2 |
| Moderate | Serious | 3.9 |
| Moderate | Moderate | 5.9 |
| Moderate | Light | 14.5 |
| Light or zero | Serious | 11.9 |
| Light or zero | Moderate | 10.2 |
| Light or zero | Light | 21.0 |

The largest single group of men is not that of the able-bodied drunkards; it is that of the teetotalers and light drinkers who are not disabled or who have only slight disability. In the course of the field work, time and again the men would express themselves in the following vein: "You know, West Madison (South State, North Clark) Street wouldn't be a bad place to live if they would just take the drunks off it. They are what gives the street a bad reputation, and there are more good men here than drunks."

The Drinking-Disability-Age Classification. — If the men on Skid Row are to be rehabilitated, three factors would seem to stand out above all others in determining the extent to which they can be helped: their disability status, their drinking classification, and their age. By grouping all possible combinations of these three factors into the fewest possible

meaningful categories, it was possible to construct a single 12-category drinking-disability-age classification that was then used throughout this study to analyze various other aspects of the men's behavior. The categories of this classification, and the percentage of homeless men falling in each category, are as follows:

| Drinking-disability-age classification | Estimated percent of all men on Skid Row |
|---|---|
| A. Severely and moderately handicapped* | 46.6 |
| 1. Elderly — 65 years of age or older | |
| Teetotaler and light drinkers | 9.7 |
| Moderate and heavy drinkers** | 4.3 |
| 2. Young and middle-aged — 20 to 64 years | |
| Teetotaler and light drinkers | 12.6 |
| Moderate drinkers | 6.8 |
| Heavy drinkers and derelicts | |
| 20-44 years of age | 4.3 |
| 45-64 years of age | 8.9 |
| B. Slightly and not handicapped | 53.5 |
| 1. Elderly — 65 years of age or older | |
| Teetotaler and light drinkers | 2.3 |
| Moderate and heavy drinkers** | 1.2 |
| 2. Young and middle-aged — 20 to 64 years | |
| Teetotaler and light drinkers | 18.6 |
| Moderate drinkers | 13.3 |
| Heavy drinkers and derelicts | |
| 20-44 years of age | 10.4 |
| 45-64 years of age | 7.7 |

*Includes those unable to work
**Includes alcoholic derelicts

This classification leads to the following findings that might be highly significant for those seeking to understand what types of men live on Skid Row.

a. Of the elderly men 65 years of age or older who comprise 17.5 percent of Chicago's Skid Row populations, only about one-third may be said to have a drinking problem (moderate or heavy

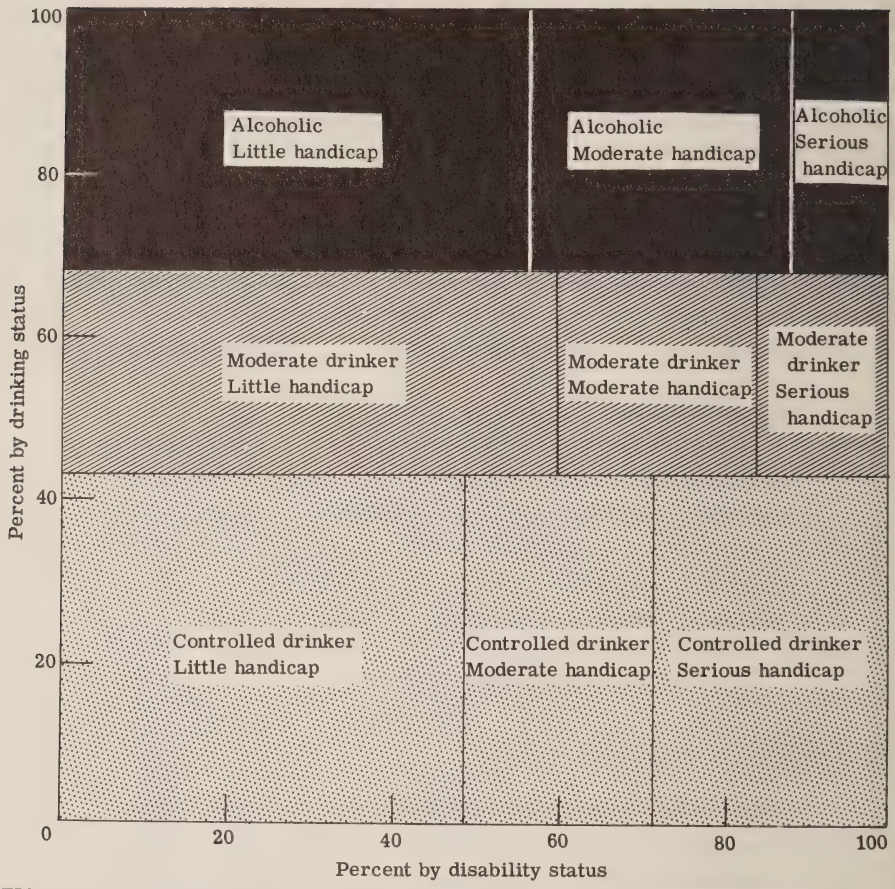



FIGURE 3-3. DRINKING STATUS AND DISABILITY STATUS OF MEN ON SKID ROW: CHICAGO

drinker). Of all elderly men, both those with and those without a drinking problem, about 80 percent are seriously handicapped.

b. About one-fifth of the men on Skid Row seem to be in no immediate need of physical rehabilitation or treatment for alcoholism in that they do not have a drinking problem, they are in the working ages, and have no serious handicap.

c. The group of heavy drinkers that would seem to be the "most promising" prospects for rehabilitation are the younger men (20-44 years of age) who are not handicapped. Ten percent of the men on Skid Row (roughly 1,200 men) fall into this group.

d. The group of heavy drinkers that are the "least promising" prospects for rehabilitation would seem to be the older men

(45-64 years of age) who also have a serious physical disability. They comprise only about 9 percent of all men on Skid Row.

e. The "intermediate groups" with respect to potentiality for rehabilitation are those who are (a) older but not handicapped, or (b) younger and handicapped. About 12 percent of the men fall into one of these two groups.

A little speculation on the above categories suggests that the size of Skid Row could be substantially reduced if selective action were taken deemed appropriate to each of these groups. Suppose a program were devised that could:

a. Provide improved low-cost housing for all elderly men without a drinking problem;

b. Provide better housing (minimum standard) for all men with no drinking problem and no physical disability;

c. Help all handicapped men who have no drinking problem to live at a higher standard of living by rehabilitation training, aid in finding jobs or even employment under semi-sheltered conditions, and by making improved low-cost housing available;

d. Absorb into a rehabilitation program one-third of the "most promising" group, one-fifth of the "intermediate" group, and one-tenth of the "least promising" group of alcoholics listed above;

e. Commit to institutions or special homes or farms all hopelessly incurable alcoholic derelicts who have lost all ability to care for themselves.

Such a program would shrink the size of Skid Row by roughly 70 percent. In Chicago, it would take about 8,400 men off Skid Row. The remaining core of 3,600 alcoholics and other persons who would not respond to treatment or who would refuse to be helped could easily be housed in the 8 or 10 newest and most fireproof of the men's hotels already built. Perhaps these places could be remodeled somewhat to provide more adequate living arrangements, and operated in such a way that the offer of rehabilitation would always be present.

If such a program were also successful in working with newcomers to Skid Row, helping them before they become enmeshed, in only a very few years the process of aging and death would lead to further shrinking

of the "hard core." It is entirely possible that a coordinated 5-year program of redevelopment, rehabilitation, and treatment for alcoholism could reduce the size of Skid Row to one-tenth or less of its present size, and leave that tenth living within one square city block on a much more self-supporting, humane, and more nearly normal plane than previously has been thought possible.

## V. ECONOMIC STATUS

Employment Status. — The picture one gets of the employment situation on Skid Row in midwinter is that there are three major groups of men:

| | Percent of homeless men |
|---|---|
| Men with jobs . . . . . | 40 |
| Men looking for work . . . . . | 23 |
| Men too old or too disabled to work . . . | 22 |

This is supplemented by a fourth group, roughly 15 percent of the total, of men who usually work but who did not care to work at the time of the interview because they were drawing temporary unemployment compensation, were on a spree drinking up wages earned previously, were temporarily ill, or did not care to work for other reasons.

Only about 40 percent of the men living on Skid Row were employed at the time of the survey (Table 3-4). Of the remaining 60 percent, about one-third were not in the labor force at all because of retirement, disability, or disinclination, while two-thirds were in the labor force

Table 3-4. EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF CHICAGO'S SKID ROW RESIDENTS, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION: WINTER, 1957-58

| Employment status | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Employment status, total. | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Employed..... | 39.8 | 31.4 | 39.2 | 43.8 | 50.7 | 25.9 |
| Steady job..... | 21.9 | 15.7 | 24.4 | 27.5 | 20.8 | 13.9 |
| Spot job..... | 17.9 | 15.7 | 14.8 | 16.3 | 29.9 | 12.0 |
| Unemployed..... | 38.5 | 24.8 | 35.4 | 37.1 | 39.6 | 62.4 |
| Applied for work..... | 23.4 | 11.0 | 21.8 | 25.4 | 29.3 | 28.2 |
| Did not care to work.. | 9.0 | 8.3 | 7.4 | 4.5 | 4.4 | 29.6 |
| Temporary illness..... | 6.1 | 5.5 | 6.2 | 7.2 | 5.9 | 4.6 |
| Not in labor force..... | 21.7 | 43.7 | 25.5 | 19.1 | 9.7 | 11.6 |

but unemployed at that particular time. Thus, the number of unemployed men was roughly equal to the number with jobs. Skid Row workers are among the first to be laid off or otherwise affected by a downturn in business conditions.

Spot Job Workers. — As noted in Chapter 2, many workingmen on Skid Row depend on a unique kind of employment — the "spot job," or temporary day work. Men are hired by employment agencies and labor contractors who are able to deliver any desired number of unskilled workers to a firm to meet an emergency or a peak work load. Unloading freight cars and trucks, washing dishes in restaurants on weekends or when conventions are in town, peddling popcorn and candy bars at major public events are examples of such work.

One of the important economic functions of Skid Row is performed by these men who are willing to accept temporary work when it is available and to sit idle when it is not. With these men as a resource, the industrialist and the businessman can meet emergencies without having to retain men on the payroll when their services are not actually needed.

Work Status and Drinking Classification. — As Table 3-4 shows, it is neither the teetotalers nor the light drinkers who are most likely to be employed; they are often the old or disabled men who are retired or cannot work. Instead, it is the moderate drinkers and the heavy drinkers who have the highest percentage of men working. Even these drinking classes contain scarcely more than a majority of working men. A high percentage of alcoholic derelicts are incapable of working or else are not inclined to work except on a temporary basis. No more than one-half of the men in each drinking class had worked during the week preceding the interview. Hence, drinking is only one of several factors that make men on Skid Row unable or indisposed to work.

Nevertheless, if a man does work there are very definite relationships between his drinking classification, the amount of work he gets, and the types of jobs he holds. Unemployment rates are much higher among those who drink excessively than among those who do not. And an extraordinarily high percentage (30 percent) of alcoholic derelicts frankly stated that they had not cared to work during the preceding week. Working men who are light drinkers or moderate drinkers are much more inclined to hold steady jobs than those who are heavy drinkers or alcoholic derelicts. If these are employed at all, it is likely to be on a day-to-day basis as spot job workers.

Income. — The income distribution of the Skid Row residents may be viewed from two perspectives: comparison with the national average and comparison with minimum levels of living. From the first point of view, these men earn a very small income in comparison with other citizens. From the second point of view, it is a small income that is

to be expected, since they hold some of the lowest paying jobs in the economy. In fact, it may be surprising that as many of the men are able to be completely self-supporting as is the case.

In 1957, the median money income of the average U.S. male 14 or older was $3,684 (among those who received any income at all). The estimated median total income of men on Skid Row was $1,083. This comparison minimizes the difference between the Skid Row man and the average man because included as income of Skid Row residents is the value of food and lodging provided on disbursing orders to public assistance recipients. Table 3-5 reports the income distribution of the Skid Row residents in more detail. A disproportionately large share of the men is concentrated in the $500 to $1,000 bracket, and also in the $1,000 to $1,500 bracket. Whereas 37 percent of U.S. men earn $4,500 or more, only about 3 percent of Skid Row men earn this much.

Table 3-5. INCOME DISTRIBUTION OF CHICAGO'S SKID ROW RESIDENTS, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION: WINTER, 1957-58

| Income | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Income per year, total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Less than $750.... | 22.3 | 17.7 | 24.0 | 26.3 | 18.8 | 21.3 |
| $750-$999..... | 19.7 | 25.6 | 26.3 | 13.2 | 14.1 | 19.4 |
| $1,000-$1,499..... | 15.5 | 10.2 | 15.2 | 15.6 | 18.5 | 17.6 |
| $1,500-$2,499..... | 17.2 | 11.4 | 14.0 | 18.9 | 19.6 | 24.5 |
| $2,500 and over... | 15.9 | 17.7 | 12.3 | 13.9 | 23.5 | 13.4 |
| No information.... | 9.4 | 17.3 | 8.2 | 12.2 | 5.6 | 3.7 |

The second point of view examines the standard of living of these men. A man on Skid Row usually has no family to support and may spend all he earns for his own maintenance. If $100 per month is accepted as the income with which a man can feed and clothe himself and provide the necessities of life at a minimum desired level of comfort and enjoyment, then almost one-half of the residents of Skid Row fall in this category. About one-third of the men have incomes of $1,500 or more, which permits them to live at a comparatively adequate level. If $75.00 per month is regarded as the minimum income on which a man can subsist, then about one-fourth of Skid Row residents, roughly 3,000 men, are in this plight, and about 1,600 men earn less than two-thirds of this minimum. Because most recipients of old age assistance get $65.00 or more per month, it appears that there is a sizable group of self-supporting men who earn less than the average relief client gets.

Income and Drinking Classification. — The men on Skid Row with the lowest incomes tend to be either teetotalers and light drinkers (the older and disabled men) or the alcoholic derelicts. The groups of moderate and heavy drinkers, which contain a higher percentage of earners,

also have higher average incomes. Nevertheless, about one-third of the men in each drinking class receive less than $1,000 per year, and may definitely be regarded as poverty-stricken. Between 30 and 40 percent of the men in each drinking class received incomes during the preceding year which would permit them to live at minimum adequate comfort. Surprisingly, this included a substantial number of men who at the time of the study were classified as alcoholic derelicts. Thus, many of the men who are the very heaviest drinkers manage to hold jobs for at least a part of the year which yield a minimum adequate annual income. Many of these are gandies who work in summer and drink in winter.

## VI. PENSION STATUS

Pensioners on Skid Row. — When surveyed, 47 percent of the men were drawing some form of pension or public assistance payments. The largest source of aid was public assistance relief. It is estimated that about one man in five on Skid Row is on the relief rolls of the Cook County Department of Welfare. It has been observed in several different cities that inflation has driven many low-income people without families to live on Skid Row, and Chicago appears to be no exception. Many of the older men who are reaching retirement age at the present time have managed to acquire only the minimum amount of Social Security coverage, which provides only $30.00 per month upon retirement. When the retirement allotment is insufficient to cover the minimum expenses of living even on Skid Row, public assistance funds are used to provide this minimum to those citizens of Illinois who meet residence requirements and have no other source of help. Many of the men have worked in industries that were not "covered" and hence have no Social Security insurance rights; they seek public assistance when old age or ill health arrives and no family is caring for them.

About 10 percent of the residents are drawing Social Security benefits. (Almost 60 percent of these have the combination of Social Security and public assistance described above.) Approximately one-ninth of the men were drawing unemployment compensation in some form. Much of this is the "rocking chair pay" (railroad unemployment compensation) that had been accumulated during the summer months by gandy dancers.

Number of Pensioners of Each Type. — On the assumption that Chicago's Skid Rows contain 12,000 men, the best estimate of the number of pensioners of each type is as follows:

| Pension status | Estimated number of men on Chicago's Skid Rows, 1957-1958 | Percent Distribution |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 12,000 | 100.0 |
| Non-pensioners | 6,372 | 53.1 |
| Pensioners, total* | 5,628 | 46.9 |
| Public assistance | 2,640 | 22.0 |
| Old-age assistance | 264 | 2.2 |
| Social Security | 1,236 | 10.3 |
| Military pension | 660 | 5.5 |
| Railroad retirement | 204 | 1.7 |
| Unemployment compensation | 1,428 | 11.9 |
| Combinations of pensions: | | |
| Public assistance and Social Security | 696 | 5.8 |
| Public assistance and railroad retirement | 60 | .5 |
| Railroad retirement and old-age assistance | 60 | .5 |

*Some of these men hold pensions from two sources. These combinations are indicated in the lower part of the table.

For purposes of analysis, the pensioners may be grouped into three major types as follows:

1. Earned-retirement pensioners — men with Social Security, military, or railroad retirement pensions;
2. Welfare pensioners — men on public assistance (relief), or old age assistance;
3. Temporary pensioners — men who are drawing unemployment compensation.

When grouped thus, with the combinations of pensions divided among the types, the number of pensioners in each major type is as follows:

| Major type of pensioners | Estimated number of men on Chicago's Skid Rows, 1957-1958 | Percent of all men on Skid Row | Percent of all pensioners on Skid Row |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total pensioners. | 5,628 | 46.9 | 100.0 |
| Earned-retirement pensioners | 1,694 | 14.1 | 30.1 |
| Welfare pensioners | 2,502 | 20.9 | 44.5 |
| Temporary pensioners | 1,432 | 11.9 | 25.4 |

Thus, of roughly 5,700 pensioners on Skid Row, 30 percent are living on pensions earned while they were younger, almost one-half are supported as public dependents, and one-fourth are temporary public dependents receiving unemployment compensation. This last figure includes the large number of men spending the winter on their "rocking chair pay" from railroad maintenance work during the summer.

Pension Status in Relation to Drinking Behavior. — Very few men who are on earned-retirement pensions are problem drinkers. Table 3-6 shows that only 18 percent of this group of pensioners are heavy drinkers or alcoholic derelicts, which is only about one-half of the proportion of heavy drinkers among the Skid Row population as a whole. This finding belies the assertion sometimes heard that when elderly men who have spent a lifetime as common laborers get their Social Security or railroad retirement pensions, they voluntarily retire to Skid Row and spend the rest of their days doing what they like to do best — drink. Instead, the facts seem to indicate that more than 80 percent of the earned-retirement pensioners who live on Skid Row live there against their will, because inflation has destroyed the purchasing power of their monthly pension check and their ability to live elsewhere.

A very surprising aspect of Table 3-6 is the finding that more than one-half (55 percent) of persons on public assistance are teetotalers or light drinkers. It has been believed by many that public welfare cases are relegated to Skid Row hotels and restaurants only when they are known to be confirmed alcoholics who cannot be trusted with cash for meals or lodging. Such men are given a "disbursing order" addressed to a particular cubicle hotel or Skid Row restaurant, usually one chosen by the recipient or recommended by the social worker. If it is sincere in wishing to conquer Skid Row, the public can reduce the number of

Table 3-6. PENSION STATUS BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION OF HOMELESS MEN, CHICAGO SKID ROW: WINTER, 1957-58

| Pension status | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| All Skid Row men, total..... | 100.0 | 14.8 | 28.4 | 24.4 | 19.9 | 12.6 |
| Not a pensioner..... | 100.0 | 13.5 | 25.8 | 24.4 | 24.4 | 11.9 |
| Welfare pensioner..... | 100.0 | 18.4 | 37.0 | 20.9 | 13.9 | 9.8 |
| Retirement pensioner..... | 100.0 | 24.5 | 33.9 | 23.7 | 11.3 | 6.6 |
| Temporary pensioner..... | 100.0 | 3.8 | 17.5 | 30.6 | 20.2 | 27.9 |
| Pension status known..... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Vertical percent distribution | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Not a pensioner..... | 51.9 | 47.2 | 47.2 | 51.9 | 63.6 | 49.1 |
| Welfare pensioner..... | 18.4 | 22.8 | 24.0 | 15.8 | 12.9 | 14.4 |
| Retirement pensioner..... | 15.0 | 24.8 | 17.9 | 14.6 | 8.5 | 7.9 |
| Temporary pensioner..... | 10.7 | 2.8 | 6.6 | 13.4 | 10.9 | 23.6 |
| Pension status unknown..... | 4.1 | 2.4 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 4.1 | 5.1 |

Skid Row residents by at least one-eighth (and probably more, because moderate drinkers were not considered), simply by seeing that enough welfare funds are appropriated to make it unnecessary for homeless welfare cases to live on Skid Rows.

A fact that is not surprising is that the men living on temporary pensions (unemployment compensation) are highly concentrated in the heavy drinking and alcoholic derelict groups. Only 4 percent of these men are teetotalers and 18 percent are light drinkers. Almost 50 percent of unemployment compensation recipients are heavy drinkers, and 28 percent are alcoholic derelicts. A high percentage of these men are the gandy dancers who are here only in winter. It is reputed that they are joined by men who cannily hold steady jobs just long enough to qualify for unemployment compensation and then suddenly become "unemployed" until their accumulated compensation rights expire. Thus, on Skid Row two programs of social legislation to protect men from unemployment have been perverted by some to institutionalize alcoholic dereliction.

However, it should not be concluded that all heavy drinkers on Skid Row are gandy dancers or men living on unemployment compensation. Table 3-6 shows that more than one-third of the men who are not pensioners are heavy drinkers. The bottom part of this table shows the pensioner status of the various drinking groups. As the above discussion suggests, a high percentage of teetotalers and light drinkers are earned retirement or welfare pensioners, while the alcoholic derelicts and heavy drinkers tend to have no pension or to be on a temporary pension.

The findings shown here about unemployment compensation are not intended to damn the programs; the gandy dancers who do not want to spend the winter drinking apparently do not come to Skid Row, but stay in other towns or other parts of Chicago.

## VII. RACE AND NATIVITY

Racial Composition. — Chicago's Skid Rows are predominantly white (about 86-89 percent).[3] However, on South State Street there are three cubicle-type hotels that cater exclusively to Negroes. As a result, 39 percent of the residents of this area are Negro. Among the white residents, anti-Negro feelings tend to be quite intense, and hotels tend to be either all-Negro or all-white. The only mixed Negro-white sleeping accommodations are in the missions, and even here the management tries to restrict the proportion of Negroes. There seem to be fewer restrictions against admitting American Indians to the hotels than against other minority groups.

A small minority of Skid Row residents are American Indians (esti-

mated at about 2 percent). Large numbers of Indian families are found in the vicinity of North Clark Street, but individual members become disorganized and drift onto Skid Row.

A rather large and long-established colony of Mexicans is situated just south of West Madison Street, along Halsted Street. Puerto Ricans have been settling on both South State and North Clark, as well as near the Mexican colony. But these Spanish-speaking residents tend to live in family groups. Although they live under slum conditions in very poor circumstances, they are not "homeless" and hence are excluded from this study. Only occasionally are Mexican or Puerto Rican men found living in cubicle-type hotels. Very few of the hotels will admit them. Because they were suspicious of the survey (as they are of any official-seeming inquiry), the refusal rate among the few Spanish-speaking persons who fell in the sample was very high.

The central and western sections of the West Madison Street Skid Row are surrounded by slums which are now occupied by Negro families. This encirclement by Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, and Negroes is bringing a steadily greater frequency of contact among the races in all Skid Row areas. In restaurants, movies, and in public facilities such as the Reading Room, the missions, and the public welfare agencies, there is much more interracial contact now than in the past. Also, the white residents of Skid Row must compete for jobs with workers from these races and often work side by side with them.

To summarize: The Skid Rows tend to be Caucasian islands in a sea of Negroes, Puerto Ricans, and Mexicans who have settled in the oldest and most deteriorated slum areas around the central business district. Despite feelings of antagonism toward these groups held by white residents, Skid Row facilities now are operated on an interracial basis more than ever before.[4]

Nativity and Parentage. — Some sociologists have tended to explain Skid Rows as groups of persons who are socially disorganized as a result of changing cultures. Migration from Europe to America and from farm to city have been cited as two of the more disorganizing types of experiences. Table 3-7, which shows the race-nativity-parentage characteristics of the homeless men, casts indirect doubt upon this thesis concerning immigration. Disproportionately fewer men born abroad were found to be in the uncontrolled drinker category while by far the disproportionate majority of men in this category were native-born of native parentage. Native-born persons of foreign parentage tend to fall in the teetotaler category rather than in the heavy-drinker category where the sociological theory would tend to place them. It is quite obvious that the theory, if valid at all, would account for only a minor part of alcoholic dereliction.

Table 3-7. RACE, NATIVITY, AND PARENTAGE OF CHICAGO'S SKID ROW RESIDENTS, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION: WINTER, 1957-58

| Race, nativity, parentage | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Race, nativity, parentage, total. | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| White, total..... | 85.7 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Native born-both parents native born..... | 42.8 | 24.4 | 37.6 | 41.6 | 56.9 | 56.0 |
| Native born-father native born, mother foreign born... | 3.5 | 2.0 | 3.5 | 3.6 | 5.3 | 2.3 |
| Native born-mother native born, father foreign born... | 4.7 | 6.7 | 4.7 | 2.2 | 6.5 | 4.2 |
| Native born-both parents foreign born..... | 20.7 | 27.6 | 20.3 | 20.6 | 16.7 | 20.4 |
| Foreign born..... | 15.0 | 25.2 | 20.1 | 13.2 | 7.6 | 6.5 |
| Nonwhite, total..... | 11.5 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Negro..... | 9.2 | 11.4 | 10.5 | 13.2 | 3.2 | 5.6 |
| Indian..... | 2.3 | 1.2 | 2.7 | 0.7 | 2.9 | 5.1 |
| Nativity unknown..... | 1.8 | 1.6 | 0.6 | 5.0 | 0.9 | ... |

## VIII. MARITAL STATUS

The very fact that they are middle-aged and familyless dictates that the homeless men of Skid Row have a marital-status composition radically different from the general population. Table 3-8 indicates that in comparison with men 20 and over in the general population, there is a considerable preponderance of men who have never married and of men who are widowed, separated, and divorced. Along Skid Row there is a saying that "95 percent of the men are here because of a woman." It certainly cannot be disputed that the residents are unique both in that an extraordinarily high proportion failed to marry and in that if they did marry, their marriages ended in separation or divorce.

Table 3-8 does not show fully the extent of the discrepancy because the difference in age composition between the general population and the Skid Row population is not accounted for. A more exact comparison can be made by standardizing the marital-status distribution for Skid

Table 3-8. MARITAL STATUS OF CHICAGO'S SKID ROW RESIDENTS, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION: WINTER, 1957-58

| Marital status | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Marital status, total..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Single (never married).... | 43.1 | 48.4 | 51.5 | 34.4 | 40.5 | 38.9 |
| Separated..... | 15.9 | 13.8 | 12.5 | 15.6 | 20.5 | 19.4 |
| Divorced..... | 28.4 | 21.3 | 23.0 | 27.5 | 37.5 | 36.1 |
| Widowed..... | 10.4 | 16.5 | 12.3 | 14.8 | 1.5 | 4.2 |
| No information..... | 2.2 | ... | 0.6 | 7.7 | ... | 1.4 |

Row men. This consists in estimating what proportion of Skid Row men would be single, married, widowed, separated, or divorced if they had the same age composition as the general male population of the nation. The results of such a comparison are as follows:

| Marital status | Percent of males 20 years and over, U.S., 1950 | Percent of Skid Row men, standardized, 1957-1958 |
|---|---|---|
| Total . . . | 100 | 100 |
| Never married . | 17 | 64 |
| Married . . . . | 74 | 2 |
| Separated . . . | 2 | 8 |
| Widowed. . . . | 5 | 6 |
| Divorced. . . . | 2 | 20 |

Thus, the proportion of single men among the Skid Row population is about 4 times as great, and the proportion of divorced men is about 9 times as great, as among the general population when the factor of age is controlled. More than 40 percent of all men on Skid Row have had a marriage which ended in divorce or separation.

Marital Status and Drinking Classification. — Widowed men on Skid Row tend to be teetotalers or light drinkers, whereas divorced or separated men tend to be heavy drinkers. A substantial proportion of single men fall in each of the drinking classifications. A later analysis will attempt to study in more detail the relationship between broken marriage and drinking.

## IX. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT

Residents of Skid Row have considerably lower educational attainment than the general population (see Table 3-9). However, this is to be expected of a group of older men who are retired or employed primarily as operatives, service workers, and unskilled laborers. A comparison between their educational attainment and that of men in the general population who have similar occupations is more revealing. A "composite" educational attainment was made by averaging the national statistics of educational attainment for low-income workingmen: male operatives, service workers, and nonfarm laborers. The differences between the educational attainment of the Skid Row men and this composite were quite small:

| Educational attainment | U.S. Composite 1950 | Skid Row men 1958 |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| No education | 3.2 | 2.9 |
| Grade school, 1-4 years | 12.9 | 14.7 |
| " " 5-7 years | 22.4 | 21.5 |
| " " 8 years | 24.3 | 20.5 |
| High school, 1-3 years | 18.7 | 21.2 |
| " " 4 years | 14.5 | 13.3 |
| College, 1-3 years | 3.0 | 4.7 |
| " 4 years or more | 1.0 | 1.1 |

On the one hand, a slightly greater proportion of Skid Row men failed to graduate from eighth grade than is true for the composite. But a slightly larger percentage of Skid Row men said they had attended college. Since both sets of statistics are based upon small samples, the differences between them could easily be due to chance variations.

Table 3-9. EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF CHICAGO'S SKID ROW RESIDENTS, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION: WINTER, 1957-58

| Educational attainment | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Educational attainment, total.. | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| None or less than 5 years.... | 17.0 | 31.5 | 25.1 | 9.6 | 6.2 | 13.0 |
| Grammar school 5-7 years..... | 20.8 | 20.9 | 24.6 | 16.5 | 16.4 | 27.3 |
| Grammar school 8 years..... | 19.8 | 16.1 | 17.7 | 23.2 | 22.3 | 18.5 |
| High School 1-3 years..... | 20.3 | 11.0 | 20.1 | 20.8 | 27.3 | 19.4 |
| High School 4 years..... | 13.1 | 15.0 | 7.0 | 13.6 | 19.6 | 13.0 |
| College 1 or more years..... | 5.7 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 5.0 | 7.3 | 8.8 |
| No information..... | 3.4 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 11.2 | 0.9 | ... |

Two important implications may be drawn from this information. First, contrary to a popular conception, Skid Row is not populated by large numbers of highly educated men who land here because of excessive drinking. Such cases are known, but they are quite rare. Second, about one-fifth of the men report they have graduated from high school, which means they have educational preparation much more than adequate for the jobs they now hold. Thus, Skid Row is neither the "last stop" for alcoholic business and professional men, nor is it a collecting place for the semi-illiterates and uneducable men of the nation. Its educational composition is just about average for the occupational composition of its residents.

Educational Attainment and Drinking Classification. — On Skid Row, the men with the most education are heavy drinkers in a higher percentage of cases, while the men with the least education are teetotalers or only light drinkers in a higher percentage of cases. Much of this relationship is due to the age distribution described above (younger people tend to have more years of formal schooling than older); but even when the effect of age is controlled, this tendency persists. This suggests that uneducated men have two reasons for being on Skid Row — personal disorganization and poverty — whereas most of the more educated men have only one reason for being there — personal disorganization.

## X. MIGRATION STATUS

Each man was asked, "How long have you lived on Skid Row since the last time you arrived from some other place outside of Chicago?" The results destroy rather effectively any notion that Skid Row is composed entirely of a group of highly transient persons. Less than 10 percent of the men had been on Skid Row for less than a month, and 55 percent had lived there longer than a year. One man in six (18 percent) had lived on Skid Row continuously for 10 years or more, and an additional 11 percent had lived there between 5 and 10 years. Moreover, these statistics count as short-term residents the gandy dancers and others who have a seasonal cycle that brings them into Chicago for a part of each year. The transients "just passing through" and the hoboes who follow the harvests are much fewer than they were 35 years ago when Nels Anderson wrote about Chicago's Skid Row and named it Hobohemia. Today, much of the migration of homeless men follows a pattern of changing from one Skid Row to another rather than following seasonal work as in the time of the hobo.

Table 3-10. LENGTH OF RESIDENCE ON SKID ROW SINCE LAST COMING TO CHICAGO: WINTER, 1957-58

| Length of residence | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Length of residence, total..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Less than 3 months..... | 20.8 | 18.9 | 17.0 | 17.5 | 29.6 | 24.1 |
| 3 to 5 months..... | 13.3 | 10.2 | 14.2 | 10.5 | 15.8 | 16.7 |
| 6 to 11 months..... | 9.8 | 11.0 | 4.7 | 11.2 | 12.6 | 12.5 |
| 1 to 2 years..... | 10.0 | 10.6 | 11.5 | 11.2 | 7.0 | 8.3 |
| 2 to 5 years..... | 16.5 | 13.4 | 20.3 | 20.3 | 11.1 | 12.5 |
| 5 to 10 years..... | 10.8 | 5.9 | 11.7 | 10.3 | 13.2 | 12.0 |
| 10 years or over..... | 18.1 | 28.7 | 20.5 | 17.0 | 10.6 | 13.9 |
| No information..... | 0.6 | 1.2 | ... | 1.9 | ... | ... |

## XI. YEARS OF SKID ROW TYPE LIVING

The interview tried to determine the total number of years each respondent had spent in Skid Row type living, combining all residence on Chicago's Skid Row with residence on Skid Rows of other cities (see Table 3-11). The median duration and the percentage of men who have lived 10 years or more on Skid Rows, by drinking status, are as follows:

| Drinking status | Median length of residence | Percent with more than 10 years |
|---|---|---|
| Skid Row, total | 5 years | 38.1 |
| Teetotalers | 8 years | 52.2 |
| Light drinkers | 6 years | 36.3 |
| Moderate drinkers | 4-5 years | 37.3 |
| Heavy drinkers | 4 years | 18.5 |
| Alcoholic derelicts | 6 years | 34.4 |

It is surprising, perhaps, to discover (as the preceding section suggested) that heavy drinkers really are short termers on Skid Row, and teetotalers are those with the longest average tenure. This is due in part to their old age (and hence longer opportunity to accumulate more years of Skid Row residence). Another factor may be that the alcoholic derelict runs much greater hazards of death, imprisonment, or accident which tend to remove him from Skid Row. Also, by changing their ways, some alcoholics can make a "comeback," get off Skid Row, and rejoin the normal community. It may be even harder for a non-alcoholic

Table 3-11. YEARS SPENT IN SKID ROW TYPE LIVING BY CHICAGO'S SKID ROW RESIDENTS, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION: WINTER, 1957-58

| Years in Skid Row type of living | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Years in Skid Row type of living, total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Less than 1 year | 18.0 | 10.3 | 20.3 | 17.6 | 24.8 | 12.1 |
| 1 year but less than 2 | 6.4 | 6.9 | 2.4 | 9.5 | 8.7 | 5.7 |
| 2 years but less than 3 | 8.0 | 2.0 | 9.5 | 9.5 | 9.1 | 7.6 |
| 3 years but less than 4 | 5.9 | 6.4 | 5.5 | 6.9 | 4.3 | 7.0 |
| 4 years but less than 5 | 5.2 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 6.9 | 7.9 | 2.5 |
| 5 to 6 years but less than 7 | 7.7 | 5.4 | 6.1 | 3.9 | 12.6 | 14.0 |
| 7-8-9 years but less than 10 | 10.5 | 12.8 | 6.3 | 8.2 | 14.2 | 16.6 |
| 10 to 14 years but less than 15 | 13.7 | 19.2 | 14.7 | 14.4 | 8.7 | 10.8 |
| 15 to 19 years but less than 20 | 6.5 | 11.8 | 7.1 | 6.9 | ... | 7.6 |
| 20 to 29 years but less than 30 | 7.6 | 9.9 | 8.9 | 5.9 | 3.5 | 11.5 |
| 30 years or more | 6.5 | 5.9 | 11.6 | 6.9 | 2.0 | 1.3 |
| More than 1 year but number unknown | 3.8 | 5.4 | 3.2 | 3.6 | 4.3 | 3.2 |
| No information | 0.2 | ... | 0.8 | ... | ... | ... |

unemployable to make a comeback from poverty than for an alcoholic to conquer his drinking, so that when a man once slides down to the level of Skid Row for economic reasons, he may be almost sentenced to die there — and hence the long residential terms for controlled drinkers.

Health Status. — Each respondent was asked "How is your health? Would you say it is excellent, good, fair, or poor?" Although this is a somewhat subjective way of measuring the health of a population, it has been found to differentiate quite effectively among sick and well people. In general, the men of Skid Row tend to be less healthy than the general population, even when allowance is made for their older age composition. The following proportions bear this out:

| Percent in each health category | Skid Row men standardized for age | U.S. general population* |
|---|---|---|
| Excellent health | 18 | 32 |
| Good health | 46 | 38 |
| Fair health | 23 | 23 |
| Poor health | 12 | 7 |

*Source: Jacob J. Feldman and Paul B. Sheatsley, Chapter 5A in an unpublished manuscript entitled "Subjective Factors in Utilization of Medical Facilities."

The proportion of homeless men who report themselves to be in excellent health is only about one-half as great as among the general population, and the proportion which says that they are in poor health is 70 percent greater than among the general population. This substantiates the materials presented above concerning physical disability.

In addition to this general question about health, each man was asked in detail about illnesses during the past three months and during the past year, so that all disabilities and sicknesses were recorded. A later chapter reports in detail on the health of these men in comparison with the general population. There the types of sickness that contribute to their poorer health are identified and the effects of these illnesses on life expectancy are measured.

## XII. CONCLUSION

When a true cross-section of the Skid Row population is taken, the notion that Skid Row is solely a community of bad men reaping a just punishment is shaken. Instead, the contention of the resource persons

reported in Chapter 2, that it is a complex neighborhood where several different categories of men are living for a variety of reasons, is amply supported. In addition to alcoholism there are problems of physical disability, welfare budgets inadequate to care for needy familyless clients, poverty, chronic unemployment, abuse of unemployment compensation programs, and broken marriage. Blaming this situation on the disorganization of immigrants appears to be unwarranted. A most encouraging finding is that a fairly straightforward program of eliminating poverty, of semi-sheltered employment, and of improved low-cost housing, with a modest program of rehabilitation potentially salvageable alcoholics and institutionalizing the comparatively small fraction of "hopeless cases" could cause Skid Row virtually to disappear in a short time, and certainly to take on a different character. Such a program would depend for its success, however, on the men themselves. In order to guess their probable reactions, we now focus our survey spyglass more directly on Skid Row as it functions on a day-to-day basis in an attempt to ferret out the feelings of Skid Row men with respect to their way of life.

## FOOTNOTES

[1]One large Skid Row hotel located apart from the regular Skid Row areas on the edge of the Loop was excluded from the sampling because it is very large and does not fit the Skid Row prototype very well. It charges higher rates, maintains unusually good lobby facilities, and seems to cater to single men working at low-wage jobs in the Loop. It has a more restrictive policy with respect to excessive drinking and seemed to be as much a very inexpensive rooming house as a Skid Row type of operation. To have included it would have used up a substantial part of the research funds on a group of men who seemed to be definitely outside of, or very marginal to, the core problems. Another isolated cubicle-type hotel, located at a considerable distance (several miles) from any of the older established Skid Row areas, was excluded because the manager refused admission. The hotel was undergoing major repairs at the request of the city, and the manager reported that his customers were already so irritable at the inconvenience that he feared having them labeled as Skid Rowers and subjected to an intensive interview about themselves would drive them away. It is believed that this hotel did contain a substantial number of men with drinking problems and other Skid Row characteristics while many of its clients were simply truck drivers stopping over for a few hours or days before going back on the road. The universe that was sampled was very nearly 100 percent of the sleeping facilities in the well-established and generally recognized Skid Row areas in Chicago.

[2]The classification was based on the following additional interview items: "About how much of the money you get do you spend on drinking?" "Do you have spells when you drink very heavily?" "How often do you have these spells?" "Why do you suppose you drink more at those times than at others?" "What do you usually drink?" "Do you usually buy at a bar or do you usually buy a bottle?" "About how many days last week did you have some wine or whisky or beer to drink?" "About how much did you drink in one day?" "Do you ever feel like you have to take a drink in the morning just before or after breakfast?" "About how many times would you say you have been arrested for being drunk?" "And how many of these times were you sentenced to jail?" "Have you ever been hospitalized for drunkenness or as a result of being drunk?" "How many times, if any, have you had the D. T. 's?"

[3]The definitions of "race" and "nativity" used here are those of the U. S. Census. Practical difficulties of collecting data make it almost impossible to employ more refined measurements.

[4]The considerable number of Negroes who walk the streets and use the Reading Room, missions, and other facilities created especially for the homeless men caused the research staff initially to suspect that all of Chicago's Skid Rows were doomed to extinction at their present sites (with possible removal to other spots) simply through the process of invasion which has been so commonplace in other types of areas where residential facilities are old and substandard. They suspected that job competition would eventually result in Negroes and Puerto Ricans taking over the jobs available to Skid Row residents with the result that the economic basis for Skid Rows as now constituted would disappear or pass to other racial groups. Long-term observers conceded that this may be the case on South State and North Clark Streets, but not on West Madison Street.

## Chapter 4

## A TYPICAL DAY ON SKID ROW

Skid Row fascinates the average person. It is a street of mystery. Delegates to the many conventions in Chicago often go to Skid Row bars for an evening of adventure. The sight-seeing busses invariably pass through the Skid Row area, hauling crowds of staring tourists. On summer evenings, young people out on dates ride along West Madison Street in top-down convertibles, shrieking at the experience of riding through Skid Row. Every few months newspaper reporters put on their old camping clothes, hide a miniature camera in their pockets, and spend a week-end on Skid Row in order to write a sure-fire attention-getter for the Sunday supplements. Why is there such curiosity about life on Skid Row? Is it that the public thinks that the people who live here lead a carefree existence, unburdened by the worries that beset the average citizen? Does the middle-aged and marriage-weary man long to come here and leave behind an obese and nagging wife? Do the people who are weary of the polite hypocrisy required of the "organization man" and the social constraints of middle-class morality think that here lives a clan of truly liberated people who have learned how to ignore society's conventions and not pay the penalties? And the sociologist — is his fascination with Skid Row just all cold objective scientific inquiry? Quite possibly this curiosity is based on a mistaken notion of what kind of life there is here.

The major finding of this study is that Skid Row life is very different from what may be the popular impression. Instead of being a carefree, anarchistic "seventh heaven," life for the typical Skid Row resident is boring, insecure, and often lonely. Fear of robbery, worry about where the next meal is coming from, "alcoholic shakes" from need of a drink, physical discomfort, shame, despondency, and self-hate are daily feelings of these men. Instead of being proudly unfettered, the homeless man suffers a perennially degraded status. Hotel desk clerks and their assistants do not hesitate to strike him or throw him bodily into the street if he talks too loudly or tries to sit in the lobby without renting a room. The police maintain perennial martial law with full authority to deal with each individual almost as they will, with nothing except human conscience to act as a check. Even the man attending the mission ser-

vices must listen to an hour-long sermon in order to get a free meal. Moreover, each day is almost like every other day, punctuated only by the changing seasons or a run of unusually good or bad luck. Perhaps Skid Row life can best be symbolized by two pictures. The first is that of the middle-aged or elderly man sitting in the lobby of a cubicle hotel looking vacantly into space as if waiting for someone who never comes. And the second is that of the gandy dancer or spot-job laborer bowed drunkenly over the bar, his earnings spent, trying to collect himself enough to get back to the cubicle without being picked up by the police.

The interview with the men included a set of "projective" questions intended primarily to inspire spontaneous talk which would reveal the personality structure of the respondent. These items also served to build the rapport necessary for later intensive probing about specific topics. One of the questions asked was, "How would you describe your typical day? Take an average day and think of how you spend it — what things do you do? (You may start with getting up in the morning if you want to.)" The responses to such questions served both to reveal personality and to give information about the specific content of Skid Row life. Each man was scored as typically participating in a particular type of activity if he mentioned it in his response. Since these answers were spontaneous, the statistics are grossly incomplete; many men perform each type of activity but failed to recall it, or considered it unimportant, during the interview. The responses of each man were coded in two steps: first by daytime activity and then by nighttime activity. Table 4-1 shows the daytime activities of Skid Row men, and Table 4-2 shows the nighttime activities of Skid Row men, both cross-tabulated by drinking classification.

The average Skid Row man spends his day engaged in some combination of these 10 daytime activities:

| | |
|---|---|
| Working | Watching TV |
| Looking for work | Reading newspapers or books |
| Walking along Skid Row | Getting extra sleep |
| Talking with other Skid Row men | Drinking in a tavern |
| Sitting in the hotel lobby | Going to the Reading Room |

Since a later chapter deals in some detail with work and looking for work, these will not be discussed here.

The daily promenade along the street is a characteristic and highly visible aspect of Skid Row life. Beginning early in the morning, while most of the city is still asleep, the sidewalks begin to fill with men. Although many have a specific destination in mind, such as going to work or to the employment office, a fair proportion are just drifting along — out to see what is happening on "the Row." By 10:00 on a fair-weather morning, the sidewalk is crowded for the entire stretch of

Table 4-1. DAYTIME ACTIVITIES OF HOMELESS MEN ON CHICAGO'S SKID ROW, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION

| Activity | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Work | 33 | 24 | 33 | 34 | 39 | 32 |
| Look for work | 32 | 27 | 30 | 33 | 38 | 28 |
| Watch TV, listen to radio | 27 | 28 | 25 | 30 | 24 | 25 |
| Read newspapers, books | 40 | 46 | 48 | 41 | 34 | 26 |
| Talk with other people on Skid Row | 29 | 24 | 29 | 26 | 28 | 41 |
| Walk around Skid Row | 29 | 37 | 31 | 22 | 27 | 30 |
| Have a date, go out with women | 1 | ... | ... | 2 | 1 | ... |
| Extra sleep, rest in room | 24 | 35 | 23 | 23 | 21 | 19 |
| Go to movie, burlesque | 11 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 10 | 9 |
| Drink in tavern | 15 | ... | 5 | 18 | 23 | 34 |
| Drink in room | 4 | ... | ... | 4 | 3 | 17 |
| Drink in alleys, doorways | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 9 |
| Write a letter | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 3 |
| Walk in places off Skid Row | 17 | 24 | 22 | 14 | 16 | 6 |
| Visit, talk with persons not on Skid Row | 4 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Play pool, cards, other games | 12 | 13 | 14 | 12 | 10 | 11 |
| Go to mission services | 4 | 1 | 3 | 3 | 8 | 5 |
| Go to Reading Room | 16 | 10 | 18 | 19 | 16 | 15 |
| Sit in lobby | 23 | 17 | 26 | 18 | 28 | 20 |
| Other | 1 | 4 | 1 | 1 | 1 | ... |
| No information | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | ... |

West Madison Street, from the Northwestern Station to Ogden Avenue. The procession continues unabated until 9:00 or 10:00 at night; then it gradually tapers off until midnight when there are only men returning home from work or intoxicated men stumbling back to their cubicles from the taverns. On Saturday and Sunday the street is jammed on both sides with pedestrians. Walking seems to have a primarily social purpose: a man may encounter acquaintances and friends and stop to visit. These encounters often lead to a nearby tavern for a drink. Small knots of sidewalk visitors collect outside the entrance of each of the large cubicle hotels, on the corners, and near the largest of the taverns. Many strollers do not join one of these groups but lean against the wall of a building to watch those who are socializing. Observation of men on the streets of Skid Row shows that a high percentage seem to be alert and interested in everything that is happening. All eyes follow the police car as it cruises up and down, looking for a staggering man in the crowd. There are plenty of "sidewalk engineers" who know every detail of the procedure for unloading kegs of beer and cases of wine and

MANY MEN SPEND THE DAY IN LISTLESS BOREDOM, SITTING IN DINGY LOBBIES

MANY WALK THE STREET, STOPPING TO VISIT WITH FRIENDS

OTHERS SIT AND WATCH WHAT'S HAPPENING ON THE STREET

whisky from trucks backed up in front of the taverns. If the bartenders "bounce" a troublesome patron, or if two men get into a fight, a crowd of spectators assembles.

If a man does not participate in the 10 main daytime activities, he may go to a movie or play cards in a hotel lobby; a substantial minority break the monotony by taking walks in places off Skid Row, while a very few are able to have social contact with persons who do not live on Skid Row.

Going to the Reading Room is an integral part of the day for many men, especially for those who are really "down on their numbers." Here a man may watch TV, read, shave, bathe, wash clothes, have a cup of coffee, write letters, or seek advice or help from the person in charge.

Although the days of all homeless men are passed in these basic daytime activities, there is some variation according to drinking status and disability status. Drinking in the taverns during the day is routine for

Table 4-2. NIGHTTIME ACTIVITIES OF HOMELESS MEN ON CHICAGO'S SKID ROW, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION

| Activity | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Work | 9 | 5 | 8 | 13 | 11 | 8 |
| Look for work | 3 | 1 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 5 |
| Watch TV, listen to radio | 48 | 49 | 53 | 41 | 51 | 44 |
| Read newspapers, books | 32 | 40 | 39 | 32 | 27 | 16 |
| Talk with other people on Skid Row | 22 | 18 | 22 | 23 | 22 | 23 |
| Walk around Skid Row | 9 | 12 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 7 |
| Have a date, go out with women | 5 | 7 | 6 | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| Extra sleep, rest in room | 12 | 18 | 9 | 15 | 10 | 6 |
| Go to movie, burlesque | 28 | 25 | 29 | 27 | 32 | 25 |
| Drink in tavern | 35 | ... | 24 | 37 | 50 | 69 |
| Drink in room | 6 | ... | 4 | 4 | 7 | 21 |
| Drink in alleys, doorways | 2 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 10 |
| Write a letter | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| Walk in places off Skid Row | 6 | 11 | 7 | 3 | 6 | 1 |
| Visit, talk with persons not on Skid Row | 5 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Play pool, cards, other games | 18 | 15 | 18 | 17 | 24 | 13 |
| Go to mission services | 15 | 11 | 10 | 15 | 18 | 25 |
| Go to Reading Room | 3 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| Sit in lobby | 22 | 16 | 25 | 23 | 26 | 12 |
| Other | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | ... |
| No information | 2 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 1 |

WINDOW-SHOPPING CAN OCCUPY HOURS

CHOOSING A PLACE TO EAT IS OFTEN THE MAJOR DECISION FOR THE DAY

only the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts. Teetotalers and light drinkers spend much more time reading than do heavy drinkers and derelicts. They also spend more time walking around Skid Row, walking in places off Skid Row, visiting with persons who do not live on Skid Row, and getting extra sleep in their rooms. Alcoholic derelicts, by contrast, spend much more time talking with people, drinking alone in their rooms, in taverns, or with a "bottle gang" in alleys or doorways.

A major nighttime activity is watching television, usually in the hotel lobby or tavern, with almost one-half of the men reporting this as a routine part of their day. Drinking in taverns is second in frequency, with more than one-third of the men listing it; even one-fourth of the light drinkers report it as a routine part of their lives. Reading newspapers, talking with other people, going to movies, sitting in a lobby, or playing cards are the other activities with which the men pass their evenings, although the teetotalers and light drinkers are more inclined to read or rest in their cubicles.

Table 4-3. DAYTIME ACTIVITIES OF HOMELESS MEN ON CHICAGO'S SKID ROW, BY DISABILITY CLASSIFICATION

| Activity | Too old to work | Unable to work, other than age | Severely handicapped | Moderately handicapped | Slightly handicapped | Not handicapped |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Work | 3 | 8 | 16 | 26 | 42 | 47 |
| Look for work | 6 | ... | 12 | 31 | 41 | 39 |
| Watch TV, listen to radio | 26 | 48 | 38 | 25 | 28 | 22 |
| Read newspapers, books | 62 | 60 | 62 | 42 | 35 | 29 |
| Talk with other people on Skid Row | 35 | 24 | 19 | 29 | 30 | 29 |
| Walk around Skid Row | 46 | 36 | 31 | 31 | 27 | 21 |
| Have a date, go out with women | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 1 |
| Extra sleep, rest in room | 37 | 60 | 47 | 28 | 16 | 13 |
| Go to movie, burlesque | 8 | ... | 11 | 8 | 11 | 15 |
| Drink in tavern | 5 | ... | 12 | 17 | 20 | 13 |
| Drink in room | ... | ... | 11 | 5 | 4 | 1 |
| Drink in alleys, doorways | 2 | ... | ... | 2 | 2 | ... |
| Write a letter | ... | 12 | ... | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Walk in places off Skid Row | 40 | 8 | 22 | 18 | 13 | 13 |
| Visit, talk with persons not on Skid Row | 8 | ... | 2 | 5 | 3 | 6 |
| Play pool, cards, other games | 2 | 12 | 13 | 11 | 12 | 15 |
| Go to mission services | ... | 12 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 3 |
| Go to Reading Room | 10 | 36 | 12 | 16 | 18 | 17 |
| Sit in lobby | 33 | ... | 31 | 27 | 16 | 19 |
| Other | ... | ... | 2 | 1 | 3 | ... |
| No information | ... | 8 | ... | ... | ... | 2 |

Tables 4-3 and 4-4 present the same activities cross-tabulated by the disability classification. In this table it may be seen that daytime watching of TV, reading newspapers, sitting in the lobby, taking a walk in places off Skid Row, and getting extra sleep in one's cubicle, are

IF YOU ARE BROKE YOU MUST SCAVENGE FOR A MEAL EVEN IF YOU ARE AN OLD PENSIONER

CROWDS GATHER QUICKLY. HERE SPECTATORS DISPERSE AFTER POLICE BREAK UP A FIGHT

activities engaged in extensively by those men who are too old to work or who are severely handicapped. Although the data are not shown here, a cross-tabulation of Skid Row activities by age of the homeless men shows that elderly men who are also heavy drinkers are somewhat inclined to drink in their rooms rather than in taverns, in contrast to younger drinkers. These same men are somewhat more inclined to attend mission services, to spend their time reading, sitting in a lobby, watching TV, or to find other solitary pastimes than are younger men.

Table 4-4. NIGHTTIME ACTIVITIES OF HOMELESS MEN ON CHICAGO'S SKID ROW BY DISABILITY CLASSIFICATION

| Activity | Too old to work | Unable to work, other than age | Severely handicapped | Moderately handicapped | Slightly handicapped | Not handicapped |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Work | 9 | 8 | 4 | 7 | 13 | 11 |
| Look for work | ... | ... | ... | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| Watch TV, listen to radio | 45 | 60 | 47 | 51 | 43 | 50 |
| Read newspapers, books | 30 | 60 | 40 | 38 | 24 | 31 |
| Talk with other people on Skid Row | 18 | 12 | 25 | 22 | 21 | 22 |
| Walk around Skid Row | 4 | ... | 11 | 9 | 11 | 8 |
| Have a date, go out with women | ... | ... | 6 | 4 | 6 | 7 |
| Extra sleep, rest in room | 17 | 12 | 22 | 14 | 10 | 6 |
| Go to movie, burlesque | 14 | 12 | 20 | 23 | 35 | 35 |
| Drink in tavern | 20 | 32 | 35 | 35 | 40 | 33 |
| Drink in room | 2 | ... | 7 | 6 | 8 | 7 |
| Drink in alleys, doorways | 2 | ... | ... | 2 | 2 | 1 |
| Write a letter | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| Walk in places off Skid Row | 8 | ... | 6 | 5 | 5 | 7 |
| Visit, talk with persons not on Skid Row | 2 | 12 | 2 | 2 | 8 | 7 |
| Play pool, cards, other games | 6 | 12 | 17 | 16 | 19 | 24 |
| Go to mission services | 8 | 20 | 21 | 14 | 19 | 12 |
| Go to Reading Room | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Sit in lobby | 33 | ... | 29 | 23 | 20 | 17 |
| Other | 2 | ... | ... | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| No information | 1 | ... | 6 | ... | 3 | 2 |

## QUOTES FROM INTERVIEWS

Although the preceding statistical description is factual and reasonably accurate, it fails to convey the "climate" or mood with which the various types of homeless men approach their typical day. In order to provide this missing element, the following quotations have been extracted from the responses of the men to the question concerning typical day's activities:

Case 575: 46-year-old man, moderate drinker. — I usually go out and look for a job if it isn't raining or if the weather isn't too bad. If I don't find work, I just come on back. I sit down and look at TV. Sometimes

I go out in the streets and walk around. In the evenings I just sit around and look at TV. I don't play no games or anything. I don't go to the show very often.

Case 167: 70-year-old pensioner in poor health, moderate drinker. — I go to bed at 7:00 p.m. Don't rise in morning until 6:00. Sleep 11 hours, sometimes longer. When I get up, I wash, sit down, say my prayers, read 'til 9 or 9:30. Come down in lobby, eat at 10. After that I sit in lobby, I go over to a friend of mine, buy a bottle of Pepsi-Cola and stay for three hours. Sometimes I go to the tavern a few doors down. Come back to lobby, watch TV 'til 5 or 6, then go out for supper. Then I go up to the room, wash a few things out, and go to bed a little bit after that.

Case 170: 50-year-old man, alcoholic derelict. — Well now, you've got me on a spot. In the morning I want a drink. That's in the winter-time, first thing I want is a drink. I work as a railroad man. You see, I work spring, summer, fall; then I draw the rocking-chair and lay around. I drink every day. I come downstairs and look for a drink, and am drunk all day long. I go from here to the restaurant to eat. I sign up every two weeks for unemployment compensation. You sign for that, see. I signed today at 9:30, and you gotta sign twice, and about four days later you get a check enough to carry you over. I do nothin'. Just sit in the lobby.

Case 173: 69-year-old man, light drinker. — Well, every morning I take a walk up and down the street here. I might go in the Reading Room and set an hour or so. Mostly I walk up and down the street. In the afternoon just the same as in the morning. Walk up and down the street. In the evening, I might go to the mission, get out about 10 and then go to bed.

Case 174: 52-year-old man, classified himself as periodic drinker. (This man lived in a hotel on North Clark Street and worked at a steady job until he fell and broke his leg. He came here after release from Cook County Hospital.)— All I can do is sit in the lobby. If I go to the cage (cubicle) you can't even read, it's so dark. So I come to the lobby until noontime and smoke. After lunch I come back to the hotel. See, we have no money. You couldn't go to the theater or anything. No kind of recreation or anything. I eat supper, then come back to the lobby and try to watch TV. You can see the pictures but can't hear a word they say. I try to go to bed at 8:00, but they are always vomiting and swearing. You can't sleep.

Case 175: 65-year-old man, light drinker. — Just loafing, nothing else. Nothing else to do. No one gives me work. Sit down and watch television. Look at TV anyhow, whether good or no good. If I get tired sitting down, I get up, take a walk, and come back.

Case 183: 35-year-old man, alcoholic derelict. — When I'm not work-

ing, I'm usually drinking in a tavern. I haven't worked in about five months. Been drinkin'. Was laid off the railroad back in the summer. Been drawin' unemployment. I drawed out all I've had comin'. During last three weeks have had a place to stay sometimes and sometimes I wouldn't. I walk the streets all night. Wouldn't sleep nowhere in this cold weather. When I got tired, just keep on walkin'. Not much you can do. I barge in and out of taverns; they stay open until almost mornin'.

Case 186: 75-year-old man, teetotaler, in poor health. — I do nothin'. I just go and get something to eat and come back. Sit down here (lobby) all day. No place to go. Just sit here and talk to the boys. I don't drink or nothin'. Can't read, can't write, or nothin'.

Case 192: 29-year-old man, teetotaler. (Veteran with a dishonorable discharge — for punching a master sergeant — who could not find regular work and finally ended up on Skid Row doing spot job labor)— Every morning I get up around 6:15 or 6:30 to go job hunting. I go to spot labor offices. Nine times out of ten, I get a job, then I work the rest of the day. Oh, if I don't get a job, I go up to the hotel. Sometimes they come up there and want guys to work. Sometimes I go to a show. Evenings I sit up and watch TV or play cards. About 10:30 I go to bed. Weekends I stay up later. Play cards 'til 1 or 2, just with the guys in the hotel here. About the only guy I know is that little Wop (hotel clerk). He is all right. He helps me out a little, and I help him, too. I'm a Wop, too. The guy (clerk) is trying to get off the street. I give him a buck or two when he needs it. These old guys, too, I give them a quarter. I know what they're going to do with it, but it turns you to see 'em, it really does.

Case 198: 65-year-old man, moderate drinker. (He says he has a drink once or twice a month after he gets his check.)— I get pretty disgusted. I do a lot of reading. My pension is not large enough to get a regular room. I just get rooms from night to night. Sometimes pay 30 days in advance when I get a check. Well, I get up and wash, get breakfast, buy a paper, read it, and watch TV, and go to the Reading Room and read more. Evenings I look at TV until about 9, then go to bed. That's about all, except for playing cards with the boys quite often.

Case 210: Heavy drinker. — I'll stand around and talk. I have a thousand friends. Some days it may be 3 or 4 before I get back to the hotel. I eat two meals a day. I'll come back to the hotel in the evening or walk a few blocks to kill a little time. May get a hold of some magazines, go up to the cubicle and read. You have to escape somewhere once in a while round here. I don't hang around out on the streets at night. This street is not to be hung around on.

Case 108: 40-year-old man, alcoholic derelict. (He says he has been arrested more than 30 times for drinking, and that when he drinks he averages one or two fifths per day.)— When I'm not workin', I get up at

9 a.m., eat breakfast, and go to a tavern for a drink. After lunch I go to any tavern, stay there all afternoon. Eat and go to tavern until 11 or 12 p.m., then go to hotel room to sleep. I may watch TV during the day and any time if I'm around the hotel. If I'm working, I get up at 3:30 a.m., work in the kitchen from 4 a.m. to 6 p.m., then work from 6 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the commissary on a railroad here in Chicago.

Case 101: 72-year-old teetotaler. (This man is an ex-laborer in a candy factory, living on a social security pension of $61.20 per month.) — I walk in a number of places, mostly to the main library in Chicago. I don't spend my time around here. I ain't got much, just kill time in any easy way. I don't want these people for friends. I'm too poor and broke to live any place else. I got to stay here because it's cheap.

Case 116: 48-year-old man, alcoholic derelict. — You mean at the present time? I get up and walk. Find somebody to talk to to pass the time. Have a few drinks together maybe. Usually, but not always, I go to church services. I go to the mission not for personal help, just to enjoy the services. I like the singing. I go to missions a lot at night, sometimes during the day. Pick up meal tickets. I get odd jobs to pick up money for meals. I'm not living, just existing.

Case 117: 65-year-old man, alcoholic derelict, on a railroad pension. — Well, if I got money, I get up in the morning and have two or three drinks for breakfast and go to work if I have a job. In the evening, I have a few more drinks and watch TV and go to bed. That's in the summertime. Now I get up about 8, start drinking, and drink all day. Mostly beer.

Case 122: 52 year-old man, alcoholic derelict. — Oh, I get up and go out and eat if I got the price. I sit a lot around here. I spend a little time up and down the street, go from one beer joint to another. You know that. I know all of the men. I got a lot of friends in here. I just walk the streets and go from one joint to another, with nothing else to do.

Case 127: 55-year-old man, teetotaler. (He came from Baltimore to look for work and has been unemployed for several months.)— I just walk around to see if anybody I know, and I talk to them. That's about all I can do. I wish that I was working. Things are pretty tough with so many people out of work.

Case 234: 36-year-old veteran, moderate drinker. (Receiving disability pension; lung removed in World War II; has chronic skin disorder. Also has a severe nervous condition.)— After breakfast I go back to the room and read for a while, lay down and sleep for a while. Then I get to thinking I can't do this all day, so I go shoot some pool or go to the bowling alley. In the evening I don't eat much if I'm not working and after supper might have a double shot of whisky and beer and bathe and go to bed. Sometimes I go to the movies, but not often.

Case 299: 48-year-old man, heavy drinker. — I've been here off and on for 20 years. I get up, get a cup of coffee. Sometimes I have the dime for that, sometimes I don't. I go where I try to get work. I go to Standard (a labor-contractor office) for a 4 a.m. call. At 6 I go down to a fishmarket on Fulton Street. Today I got only one hour's work. But next week Lent starts and then lots of fish. Hell, what is there to do here? I'm asking you. Hell, you get disgusted. So I go get a glass of wine.

Case 232: 34-year-old man, alcoholic derelict. (This man says he has been arrested at least 250 times for drinking and says he has had the D. T. 's five or six times; he has just been in the hospital because of a peptic ulcer and pancreatitis, a liver ailment. He is on general public assistance.)— I get up and have breakfast, come back here to the hotel and sit around the lobby. I may read, I may go to a bar and drink. I eat lunch, then go to a movie every day when I'm not drinking. After lunch I probably go back to a bar, stay there all afternoon. Eat supper, and if drinking, go back to a bar; if not drinking then I go to a mission at night after supper. May see friends in lobby, on the street, in bars. Go to bed about midnight. I watch TV in bars when I am drinking. I may go to the Reading Room and watch TV in both the morning and the afternoon.

Case 211: 41-year-old man, moderate drinker. — I been working at spot job labor offices, but things are slow. I'm down there at 6 a.m. I stay down there 'til noon anyway. Then I go down to the Reading Room. I sit around here some. I might go out and get a few beers. Oh, I know a few fellows here. We play penuchle. Oh, I go to a show once in a while. I got friends out on the North Side. Go out there once in a while. That's about it. Same thing every day. Right now I catch three days a week work. It's slow now.

Case 215: 29-year-old man, heavy drinker. — That varies whether I am working or not. If I start drinkin', then you know what happens. If I'm workin', I just go to work. If I want to try to save some money, I try to stay around the lobby here, maybe go to a show. If not, I start drinkin'. I spend quite a bit of time in the lobby here — all the time, when I'm not drinkin'. As a rule I don't talk to no one. I hang by myself unless I get with a bottle gang. To be truthful, I spend most of my time drinkin'. Last Tuesday I had $66. I'm on railroad retirement. Wednesday morning I had 6 cents. I threw it away, lost it. Drank 'til I think I'll kick off. That's about all of it.

Case 220: 33-year-old man. — I came to Chicago from a gandy camp. Never did that before. When I came in from the camp, I'd saved $125 and hit Madison Street. I blew it by giving it away. When I shipped out the next Monday, I did not have a cent. A typical day? I get up, I have very little money. I need to eat, but I spent the 40 cents I had on beer.

After that I went bumming. I didn't get anything so I came back and go to bed, then I go out bumming again. I drink much wine and it's no good for me. All I do is bum around with the boys. Try to get spot jobs but I don't have much success. I go to a few movies and I visit in the lobbies with the boys and I spend a lot of time in the bar drinking. When I'm bumming around, I ask the guys for money for flop and beer. Today I don't have any luck. I didn't even get enough for tonight's flop.

Case 222: Chronic alcoholic. — If I got a bed, I get up around 7:30. Come down, sit around. If I got the price of a bottle, I buy a bottle. If I don't have money, maybe I'll run into a friend. Maybe he'll have enough for a jug (of wine). Occasionally, if I got the price, I have a cup of coffee. Spend morning drinking the jug or hustling another one. On week days, you can get a meal at the Pacific Garden Mission for lunch, or you might run into a pal to loan you a little change. Well, if you got your bed, you go up to that, sleep it off, come back down, start the same old routine. Sometimes I check the spot offices in the morning. Railroad offices. That's about all I do.

Case 223: 33-year-old man, light drinker, unemployed. (Came here in search of work.)— Last three weeks I been going to a movie, laying around the lobby reading. Before that I used to work. I don't drink. There's nothing else to do. Sometimes eat here, sometimes across the street. I usually go up to the room and read for a couple hours. Sit around the lobby, talk to the old codgers. Then go up to my room and read some more. Turn out the light and listen to the drunks make noise. No, that's about the story of it right there.

Case 002: 55-year-old man, borderline chronic alcoholic. (Unemployed more than a year, with only odd jobs since 1948.)— I usually get up around 8 and go have breakfast, come back and sit in the lobby and read a paper for a while. Then I get sleepy and go back and lay down for a while. It's monotonous. I get tired of looking at TV. Lots of times after breakfast I get out of here and I walk around for an hour or two. Sometimes I meet my married sister on State and Madison. She gives me cigarettes. She's the only relative I got. I don't go to her home. Her husband and I don't get along. He used to be a heavy drinker and very abusive. He don't like me 'cause I drink sometimes. I very seldom see men here on the street. I usually mind my own business and keep to myself. Just know a few men here at the hotel and talk to them for awhile. There's nobody that I talk to steady. I'm too long on relief. Around supper I watch TV. I never go out on the street after 10. That's the curfew on the street. It's too rough on the street after dark, and I can't defend myself. I don't want to get disfigured any more than I am.

Case 007: 50-year-old dishwasher and spot job worker, heavy drinker. — You start hustling. Go to different places to try to get work. If I

have any money in my pocket, I eat in cheap places. Then I go to these different places to pick up work where I could. Some of these manpower agencies. I try there for an hour or so, then I go down to the trucking places and ask if they need any help. Then I go to Jefferson and Madison (State Casual Labor Office) to see if I could get picked up. Today, you can stay there all day and not get wanted. You generally time yourself, allow yourself an hour and if you don't make it here, go someplace else. Just walk, walk, and walk, to look someplace where there are restaurants, where you can wash dishes. From day to day you never know what you're going to do. Most of the time you end up with nothing. You get fed up; you quit, go out and get a beer, wanting to forget about your troubles. If I get a day's work, then I pay my hotel for three nights. In other words, you're on the move, never knowing from day to day. Here it's always the same old story. Some days you'll work, some days you won't. Most of the time you won't hit steady jobs. The jobs you get would be anything from handling freight, dishwashing, or anything. If you don't make it, you're out of luck, you have to depend on the missions for a handout. And if you don't make it that way, you walk the street all night. To eat at the missions, you know what time they open up, hold services, and then give you coffee and a bowl of soup. They give you a bed; then you're set for the night. When you don't have a place to sleep, they generally push you around. The police tell you to keep moving. Next day you'll take anything. In summertime you'll sleep on the benches in the park; in wintertime it's pretty tough. In other words, you exist for the day. You do it to exist. You don't have enough to buy clothes. Some guys will sell their clothes to get a bottle of wine. I've done it to get a night's flop, to get something to eat. I'm just like the other guys! I'm no different. When you're drinking, you're not so hungry. When you get over it, you're hungry.

Case 008: 39-year-old man, heavy drinker. — Well, you go out and eat and drink, and you go out and mess around. At other times you make the Reading Room (if you are broke). You have to be either in the Reading Room, your own room, or in a bar. I drink in the bars until about 11 or 12 p.m. I get up about 7 or 8, have a cigarette, and then I take a drink. If I ain't got it in my room, I go out for it. Then I usually get breakfast. Then if I ain't workin', I go to drinkin'. I drink fast and furious. Say about three double shots. I come down the street until I hit another bar and maybe kill a hour with a cup of coffee. Then I go take off to another bar. Then have lunch, if I have money. If I ain't, I don't eat. Then I go back to the room and read (reads Westerns). If I wanted to drink, I would go out. I eat a light supper, eat more at noon. Then after supper I go out and get drunker than hell. I drink heaviest in the evening. Drink 'til midnight." (In describing his periodic drinking, this man says, "Maybe I work a month or so and then — Bang! I get

drunker than hell. I go after it like a goddarn snake. I drink until I'm broke, and when I'm broke, then I go back to work.")

Case 016: 50-year-old spot job worker, born in Latvia. (A World War II refugee, suffering from nervous disorders. Is a light drinker.)— I spend my day at Manpower (employment agency). I sit all day looking for a job to come. When the telephone ring, my heart pound. Maybe it for me. About 6 in the morning, I go to the employment agency. I only eat one time a day. Yesterday I ate nothing. I stand in line at the Salvation Army and get a bowl of soup. That's all I eat all day. I hope God help me. I work hard all life. I used to have it good. They (employment agency) close at 6:30 p.m., and I have to move out. After they close, if I got money I buy eats, if no, stand in line for a free meal. Then I come here, go to bed. No, I not from here. Don't know guys. Watch TV a little. The guys here like bottle. Not me, no.

Case 019: 49-year-old ex-alcoholic. — Well, I work roofing. Worked five days this week. It was pretty slow before that. Work an 8-hour day. Have to leave around 5 or 6 to get to work. After work lots of times I go to the show or to a mission. Or else I come up here and play the radio. If I'm not working, I come up here and lay down, or walk up and down the street, or go down to the Loop. I go in and get coffee about eight times a day. I'd do anything to keep from drinking. Before I went on the wagon, I would be sittin' in the tavern with a jug most of the day. I keep busy all day, keep movin'. I windowshop a lot, buy clothes down at the Salvation Army, buy groceries, that's really about it. Well, no, I don't mix with these damned winos. No, I don't see anybody except at work.

Case 023: 41-year-old gandy dancer. — I drink. Even before breakfast I drink. I drink breakfast! I been on a drunk for a couple of weeks. Usually I'm a gandy. Then I don't go on these drunks. I don't eat much when I'm drinking. Every two days. I drink here mostly. When I work I go out on the railroad. No, I never drink when I'm working. I'd a been hit by a train long ago if I did. When I'm in town I go to the bars, spend quite a bit of time there. More here in the room. Oh, yeah, I see the guys and drink with them.

Case 031: 74-year-old pensioner, teetotaler. — I'm an old age pensioner. I stay home most of the time. I stay alone and protect myself. I'm afraid. These guys all gang up on you. After supper I go to my room and lay down and go to sleep.

Case 034: 58-year-old spot job worker, heavy drinker. — Dan (his friend) and I will read and pass the time of day together. Maybe go and hunt for a job at the employment agency. If we are due for a blood bank we make a blood bank. Otherwise we come back to the hotel and read. Mostly we just read and talk. Sometimes we go to a show or go drinking. I buddy around with my friend Dan.

Case 057: 51-year-old man suffering from dropsy but not on public assistance. (He was interviewed in the Reading Room, as he has no fixed place of residence and sleeps out much of the time.)— I get down to the missions and get myself a bed when I can and have supper down there. I go right to bed after supper in the bed they give you. Get up early, then you go out looking at some of the missions where they give out breakfast. Sometimes you miss out. Then I go down to the agencies and see if I can pick up a day job. Hang around there and if you don't pick up anything, then you do the same thing the next day. Follow the same routine. Through the missions again at lunch time. In the afternoon I come to the library here or go to the park and stay there 'til time to go to the missions for dinner.

Case 466: 66-year-old immigrant, light drinker. (He is apparently of borderline intelligence, speaks very little English and comprehends with difficulty. He has not slept in a room for 15 or 20 years.)— I get up and go through alleys looking for boxes or food. Then I come here about 9 (to the Reading Room). I sit in the Reading Room all day, just sit and read the paper. After that, I walk around in the park and go to sleep by the canal. I talk mostly with two or three guys. I know some people around. I sleep by myself mostly. Almost all food I get is from alleys, garbage cans.

Case 468: 38-year-old heavy drinker. (Until recently was employed as a short-order cook but has been out of work for some time, probably because of drinking. Immediately prior to interview had been sleeping out.)— The first thing to do is scrounge a cup of coffee. The Salvation Army is the best bet for that. Until 9 a.m., I attempt to steal some sleep. This is generally done by staying in the office of one of the employment agencies, then it's a matter of walking the streets looking for a job at places that hire help. Then I come here (Reading Room) to look at the papers. Chase down any ads that are promising. Then to try to find something to eat. This at one of the various missions. Then again to try to steal some sleep, possibly here. Now about 5, it's time to try to get into one of the missions, to try to sleep. This effort will take anywhere from 7 to 10 at night and usually fails. Then you walk the streets until exhaustion or cold drives you inside. You can spend until midnight in the lobbies of the cheap hotels by moving from one to the other. In the saloons you can stay around until 2 a.m. Then you walk until 5. You can stop in the Union Station or at the Transportation Building briefly to get warm. Then you're right back at the Salvation Army again (for the morning cup of coffee). For five of the last seven nights I have been without a bed. It's been eight days since I was flat broke. Prior to that time I supported myself.

Case 469: 38-year-old veteran, non-disabled, spot job worker; sleeping out. — I roam the streets. I hang around taverns and keep warm. I

go to an old truck on Milwaukee, it's abandoned, I sleep in it. Last night I slept in it. Yes, for the last three nights. Before that I got a ticket for Dawes' Center. I go to work at spot jobs in the morning. I stay there until 9:30 or 10:00. (He means he goes to work to look for spot jobs.) Then I make the Christian Industrial Mission for breakfast. Then I come here to the Reading Room. I sit in here until it closes, weekdays at 6:00. Then I go to the Salvation Army, attend the service. They give you something to eat. Then I hang around the taverns until they close. I haven't touched a drink for five days. I'm kinda scared. I was throwing up.

*Chapter 5*

# *WHAT HOMELESS MEN THINK OF LIVING ON SKID ROW*

When this research program was first undertaken, a set of questions frequently asked was, "How do the men themselves feel about living on Skid Row?" "Are they satisfied with their life?" "Is this way of living what they really need and want in order to be happy?" "If Chicago did something to improve their living and other conditions, would the public merely be imposing its standards of respectability and comfort upon a group that feels no need for such improvement?" In order to explore this subject, the men were asked a sequence of questions about how well they liked Skid Row living, and what things they liked or disliked about it. This chapter presents the findings derived from the materials assembled. Because these findings are basic to the plan of analysis for later chapters, it has been thought important to give the reader a feeling for the situation as well as an objective understanding of it. In order to accomplish these goals, the present chapter is divided into three sections. Section I is a formal statistical analysis; section II presents summary measures of reaction to Skid Row living; section III consists of illustrative quotations taken from the interviews.

## I. SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD SKID ROW LIVING

### A. GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARD SKID ROW LIVING

Contrary to what may be popular belief, most homeless men dislike their way of life. Seven out of each ten men interviewed reported a dislike for living on Skid Row, and only two in each ten said they like it. This conclusion emerged from a tabulation of responses to the question, "How do you feel about living on (West Madison) (South State) (North Clark) Street? In general, do you like or dislike it?" The results of this compilation are shown in Table 5-1. By tabulating separately the verbal side-comments made by the men as they cast their votes, counts were kept of those who indicated extremes of like and dislike — those who indicated they "like Skid Row life very much" and those who said they "dislike it very much." Only 10 percent of the men

voluntarily showed enough enthusiasm to receive the "like very much" classification, whereas 22 percent showed enough aversion to be categorized as "dislike very much." The level of liking was lower and the intensity of disliking was higher on West Madison Street than on the other streets and was somewhat higher among men living in cubicle-type hotels than among those living in hotels with rooms. (But there was great variation from one hotel to another. For demonstration of the fact that some cubicle-type hotels are liked very much, see below.) The most intense dislike for Skid Row life was displayed by those living in missions or selected for interview from mission soup lines. Supposedly, this group is the most depressed by Skid Row living, and hence has the greatest incentive to dislike it. A higher percentage of heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts expressed dislikes and intense dislikes for Skid Row living than did teetotalers and light drinkers. Whereas only about 1 in 10 uncontrolled drinkers confessed a liking for Skid Row, more than 1 in 4 controlled drinkers indicated a liking for this kind of life. This finding is surprising until the components of this liking are analyzed, as they are later in this chapter.

Irrespective of whether the men answered the above question with a positive or a negative response, everyone was asked, "What do you like (Are there any things you do like) about living here?" Almost everyone (84 percent) was able to mention at least one thing about Skid Row life that he liked (Table 5-2). Among the things mentioned most frequently were:

| Things liked | Percent of men mentioning* |
|---|---|
| Cheapness of living | 57 |
| Employment opportunities nearby, other economic facilities | 25 |
| The people | 24 |
| Hotels, living accommodations | 11 |
| Freedom to do, dress, as you please | 7 |
| Mission activities | 7 |
| Interest, excitement, variety of the life | 7 |
| Welfare and community facilities | 7 |
| "Feels at home" here, has friends | 3 |
| Drinking facilities, taverns | 2 |

*Percents add to more than 100 because each man could mention several different things liked.

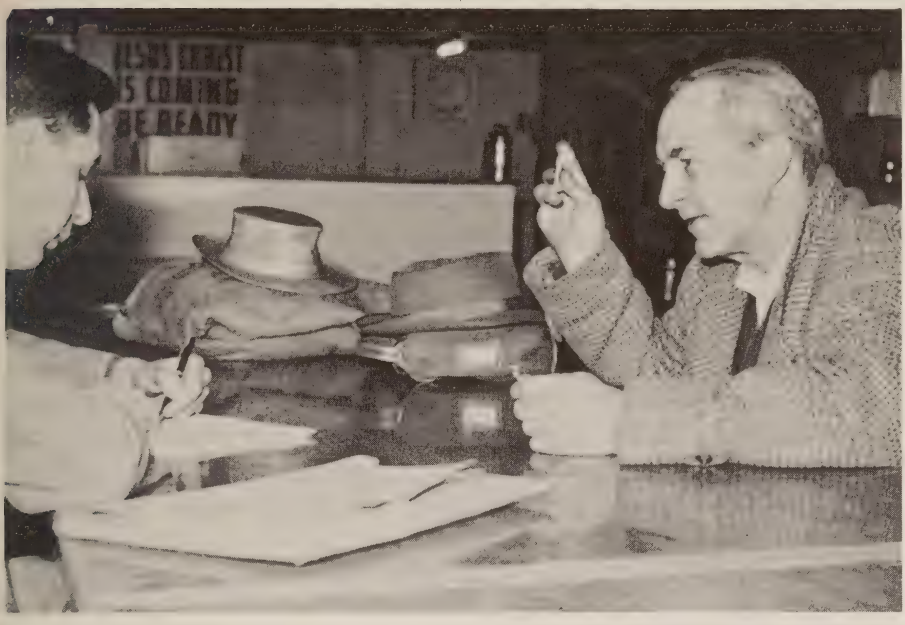
Table 5-1. HOW HOMELESS MEN FEEL ABOUT LIVING ON SKID ROW

| Feeling toward living on Skid Row | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Likes living there | 21 | 27 | 27 | 23 | 9 | 11 |
| Neutral or ambivalent | 4 | 7 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 6 |
| Dislikes living there | 70 | 62 | 67 | 71 | 78 | 73 |
| No response, in jail, hospital, or sleeping out | 5 | 4 | 2 | 3 | 10 | 9 |
| Likes very much | 10 | 9 | 14 | 13 | 4 | 4 |
| Dislikes very much | 22 | 18 | 13 | 20 | 35 | 29 |
| No information | 1 | ... | 1 | 1 | 1 | ... |

Comparatively few men gave responses that would suggest they found Skid Row life satisfying. Responses of "feel at home," "find life here interesting or exciting," or "you can be yourself and do as you please," were given by only a small fraction. Most of the likes refer to the hard facts of economics and livelihood—the cheapness of living and proximity to employment opportunities, welfare units, missions, etc. More than one-half (57 percent) mentioned the lower cost of food and shelter as something liked about Skid Row. This is the only favorable thing a large percentage of men could find to say about their neighborhood. Only 24 percent of the men voluntarily expressed a liking for even some of the other people, their fellow residents.

Table 5-2. THINGS HOMELESS MEN REPORT THEY LIKE ABOUT LIVING ON SKID ROW

| Things liked about Skid Row | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| The people | 24 | 18 | 28 | 14 | 27 | 38 |
| Skid Row is interesting, exciting, always something doing | 7 | 6 | 10 | 3 | 8 | 9 |
| Hotel, living accomodations | 11 | 18 | 12 | 11 | 10 | 6 |
| Mission activities | 7 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 14 | 8 |
| Freedom to do as you please, dress as you like | 7 | 10 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 8 |
| Cheapness of living, lodging, food, etc. | 57 | 56 | 61 | 61 | 51 | 50 |
| Economic facilities, employment centers. | 25 | 21 | 31 | 28 | 15 | 24 |
| Drinking facilities, taverns, tolerance of drinking | 2 | ... | ... | 2 | 6 | 2 |
| Welfare and community facilities | 4 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 3 |
| No reminder of failures, makes him feel "normal" | 2 | 3 | ... | 1 | 6 | 3 |
| "Feels at home", has friends here, feels he "belongs" | 3 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 1 | 2 |
| Likes, but reasons given are vague or other not elsewhere classified | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | ... | ... |
| No likes reported | 15 | 17 | 13 | 16 | 17 | 15 |




A MAN SEARCHING VAINLY FOR WORK TELLS THE INTERVIEWER WHAT HE THINKS OF SKID ROW

AN EXAMPLE OF SKID ROW FILTH. UNUSED DOORWAYS ACCUMULATE RUBBISH, DISCARDED BOTTLES, AND VOMIT. THEY ARE ALSO PUBLIC URINALS

Men who were teetotalers or light drinkers were inclined even more than others to rate cheapness of living, the employment opportunities, and welfare or community facilities as Skid Row's chief virtues. Heavy drinkers and alcoholics placed above-average emphasis upon a liking for the people who live there, the mission activities, tolerance of drinkers, and a feeling of being "normal" without being reminded of failures. But even among this latter group a liking for Skid Row as a way of life was conspicuously absent.

When asked, "What don't you like (Are there things you don't like) about living here?" almost everyone was also able to mention at least one thing he did not like about Skid Row living. The two things homeless men mentioned most frequently were (a) the other homeless men, and (b) drunkenness and heavy drinking; 61 percent reported they did not like at least some of their neighbors, and 39 percent did not like so much drinking going on. The frequency with which various things were mentioned as disliked is as follows:

| Things disliked | Percent of men mentioning |
|---|---|
| The people | 62 |
| Drunkenness and heavy drinking | 39 |
| Low status of Skid Row residents | 27 |
| Poor living conditions, hotels | 24 |
| Skid Row symbolizes failure | 18 |
| Dirt, deterioration, poor health conditions | 12 |
| Physical mistreatment | 7 |
| Eating places | 5 |
| Economic exploitation | 5 |

Although the men are unhappy with physical conditions (see below), their spontaneous complaints were overwhelmingly directed toward social situations and other people in the area. Society at large is unhappy about Skid Row because of the social conditions there and the behavior of the residents. The men themselves are unhappy about Skid Row for exactly the same reasons. Dissatisfaction with the material aspects — housing, physical deterioration, the physical environment — were mentioned by only about one-third of the men who made any complaints. Although this is a high level of discontent with housing and is a strong indication that urban renewal is needed, these results suggest that physical renewal is only a part of the problem. Even the homeless men themselves realize this.

More than 60 percent of the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts showed dislike for the people who live on Skid Row, and their reported

dislike of the drinking was as frequent as their dislike of the people. They disliked the hotels, cubicles, the filth, the physical mistreatment, the eating places, and the deterioration even more than the teetotalers or light drinkers. Also, they were more acutely aware that Skid Row symbolizes failure and an abnormal way of living.

Having localized the major aspects about which there was like or dislike of Skid Row living, the interviewer tried to get each respondent to describe his feelings in more detail. This took the form of probing in two directions: (a) trying to discover the man's attitude toward his hotel and housing situation, and (b) trying to discover his attitude toward fellow homeless men.

## B. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HOTELS IN WHICH THEY LIVE

In order to learn how homeless men feel about their housing, each was asked, "How do you like living in this (hotel) (rooming house) (other lodging place)?" Roughly one-half (47 percent) of the men who expressed an opinion about their hotel stated that they liked living there, while 30 percent reported outright dislike for it. An additional 16 percent reported that they disliked their place of living but considered it better than other places to live on Skid Row. (The remainder of the men were noncommittal.) Thus, almost one-half of the men like and one-half dislike their present living situation. The number and variety of things disliked are considerably greater among residents of cubicle hotels than among residents of hotels with rooms, and are somewhat greater on West Madison Street than in the other Skid Row areas.

In Table 5-3, roughly one-quarter of the men are shown as having

Table 5-3. THINGS HOMELESS MEN REPORT THEY DISLIKE ABOUT LIVING ON SKID ROW

| Things disliked about Skid Row | All Skid Row men | Drinking Classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| The people | 62 | 63 | 68 | 54 | 63 | 59 |
| Drunkenness, heavy drinking | 39 | 42 | 45 | 26 | 45 | 38 |
| Hotels, living conditions | 24 | 22 | 17 | 26 | 28 | 29 |
| Mission activities | 3 | ... | ... | 6 | 5 | 2 |
| Physical mistreatment, false arrest | 7 | 1 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 15 |
| Economic exploitation | 5 | 3 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 |
| Dirt, deterioration, poor health conditions | 12 | 11 | 10 | 14 | 9 | 21 |
| Eating places, food served | 5 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 12 |
| Lack of other community facilities, other | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Dislike Skid Row because it symbolizes failure, is not a normal way to live | 18 | 10 | 11 | 17 | 25 | 35 |
| Dislike low status accorded residents | 27 | 29 | 28 | 25 | 27 | 24 |
| Dislike-reasons given are vague or general | 3 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 5 |
| No dislikes reported | 14 | 16 | 18 | 19 | 4 | 8 |

volunteered the information that one of the things about Skid Row they disliked was the housing situation. In Table 5-4, in reply to a direct question about liking their housing, at least 45 percent expressed dissatisfaction. Both of these figures reveal an impressively large amount of dissatisfaction. Yet it is evident that there are other serious troubles, too. It should not be forgotten that 70 percent showed a general dislike for Skid Row living. The difference (25 percent) represents men who apparently do not dislike their housing but dislike Skid Row for other reasons. Also, it should not be forgotten that almost one-half of the men are happy with their housing.

Table 5-4. HOW HOMELESS MEN FEEL ABOUT THE HOTEL IN WHICH THEY ARE LIVING

| Attitudes toward hotel | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Likes living in this hotel | 47 | 48 | 58 | 42 | 41 | 43 |
| Dislikes living in this hotel, total | 45 | 45 | 39 | 47 | 52 | 47 |
| Dislikes living in this hotel, no comparison with other hotels | 30 | 30 | 26 | 31 | 33 | 31 |
| Dislikes living here, but likes better than other Skid Row hotels | 16 | 15 | 13 | 16 | 19 | 17 |
| Neutral--neither likes nor dislikes, or ambivalent | 4 | 4 | 2 | 7 | 3 | 4 |
| No information | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 6 |

Alcoholics were less satisfied with their hotels than were the teetotalers or light drinkers.

At least seven characteristics are important to homeless men when they select a place to live. The question, "What things do you like about living in this (hotel, etc.)?" yielded the results reported in Table 5-5. The following items stood out above all others:

| Things liked | Percent of men mentioning |
|---|---|
| Cleanliness | 31 |
| Other residents of the hotel | 22 |
| The management, way clerks treat them | 22 |
| Quiet | 19 |
| Hot water, bathing facilities | 15 |
| Privacy (hotels with rooms, rooming houses) | 10 |
| Less drinking, less rowdiness than other hotels | 7 |

Questions concerning liking for elevators, fireproof construction, laundry facilities did not have a chance to receive a large vote because

Table 5-5. THINGS HOMELESS MEN LIKE ABOUT THE PLACES IN WHICH THEY LIVE

| Things liked | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Cleanliness | 31 | 39 | 29 | 35 | 30 | 18 |
| Quietness | 19 | 21 | 21 | 22 | 15 | 18 |
| Privacy (hotels with rooms) | 10 | 11 | 11 | 9 | 8 | 8 |
| Hot water, bathing facilities | 15 | 19 | 15 | 18 | 13 | 10 |
| Laundry, other facilities for personal care | 3 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| Fireproof construction | 2 | ... | 2 | 5 | 2 | 4 |
| Elevator | 1 | ... | 1 | 2 | ... | ... |
| Less drinking, less rouwdiness here | 7 | 8 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 8 |
| The management | 22 | 14 | 27 | 20 | 24 | 20 |
| The other residents | 22 | 10 | 27 | 20 | 24 | 22 |
| Other reasons, not classified above | 15 | 12 | 17 | 20 | 11 | 11 |
| Likes hotel, but reasons given are vague | 8 | 10 | 9 | 4 | 9 | 10 |
| Nothing liked, or no likes reported | 20 | 20 | 15 | 22 | 23 | 26 |

many hotels do not have these facilities, and each man was being asked to evaluate his particular place of residence. It is noteworthy that, when encouraged, 80 percent of the men were able to mention at least one thing about their housing that they liked.

In many ways, the things disliked about the hotels in which they live are simply the reverse of the things liked. In response to the query, "And what don't you like about living in this (hotel, etc.)?" the following list of "gripes" emerged:

| Things disliked | Percent of men mentioning |
|---|---|
| Dirt | 19 |
| Noise | 18 |
| Rooms (cubicles) too small | 17 |
| Too much drinking, rowdiness | 17 |
| Other residents of the hotel | 16 |
| Poor bathing facilities, not enough hot water, not enough toilets | 6 |
| Theft of belongings, jackrolling | 4 |
| The management, way clerks treat them | 4 |

More than one-third of the men could not mention anything about their living situation which they disliked, and hence appeared to be fully satisfied. This is a very important finding. Almost one-half of the men on Skid Row liked their living place and more than one-third had no

fault to find with it. This suggests that some of the places to live are good and well-operated, even though others may be bad and poorly operated. In order to test this hypothesis, the responses to the question, "How do you like living in this place?" were tabulated separately for each hotel. This permitted a rating of each hotel according to what percentage of its residents reported they liked living there.[1] Although the rules of confidentiality prevent naming the hotels, it is possible to show that some are liked much more by their residents than others. Following is a summary of responses by the men:

| Percent of residents who report they like living in their present place of residence | Number of cubicle-type hotels | Number of hotels with rooms |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 34 | 37 |
| 90 to 100 percent like living here | 6 | 18 |
| 70 to 89 percent like living here | 3 | 1 |
| 50 to 69 percent like living here | 9 | 7 |
| 25 to 49 percent like living here | 9 | 2 |
| Less than 25 percent like living here | 7 | 9 |

It is unmistakably clear that the managements of some hotels have only happy customers, while in other hotels almost everybody dislikes living there. The most logical interpretation to place upon such results is that there is a very great variation among the hotels in respect to physical condition, manner run, and treatment of the men. It is diffi-

Table 5-6. THINGS HOMELESS MEN DISLIKE ABOUT THE PLACES IN WHICH THEY LIVE

| Things disliked | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Dirt, poor maintenance | 19 | 23 | 16 | 20 | 17 | 19 |
| Noise | 18 | 16 | 12 | 19 | 24 | 22 |
| Theft | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 3 |
| Poor bathing facilities, insufficient hot water, toilets | 6 | 3 | 2 | 9 | 8 | 7 |
| Rooms too small, dislike for cubicles | 17 | 17 | 14 | 14 | 21 | 21 |
| Place not fireproof | 1 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Stench, poor ventilation | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | ... | 2 |
| Too much drinking, rowdiness | 17 | 18 | 16 | 15 | 20 | 16 |
| The management | 4 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 2 |
| The other residents | 16 | 21 | 14 | 16 | 15 | 17 |
| Other reasons, not classified above | 8 | 9 | 8 | 13 | 7 | 3 |
| Dislikes hotel, but reasons given are vague | 4 | 1 | 4 | 4 | 7 | 4 |
| Nothing disliked, or no dislikes reported | 37 | 43 | 42 | 30 | 33 | 38 |

cult to understand how a hotel can rate 90 to 100 percent approval by its occupants unless the management has made a determined effort to provide those items that the men like (Table 5-5) and to minimize the things that the men indicate they dislike (Table 5-6). One-third of the hotels (6 cubicle-type and 18 hotels with rooms) received such a rating. Conversely, it is difficult to understand how more than one-half of the residents can dislike the place in which they live unless the building is so old and the management is so greedy to maximize profits that almost nothing is or can be done to furnish the things the men like and to eliminate the things they dislike. Yet almost one-half of the hotels fall in this category (16 cubicle hotels and 11 hotels with rooms). On the basis of these ratings, one might suspect that all hotels on Skid Row may be subdivided roughly into three categories:

| | Number of cubicle-type hotels | Number of hotels with rooms |
|---|---|---|
| Reasonably clean and well-operated (rating of 70 to 100 percent) | 9 | 19 |
| In need of rehabilitation and possible change of management (rating of 50 to 69 percent) | 9 | 7 |
| Candidates for demolition | 16 | 11 |

It is not suggested that the votes cast by the men be adopted as the criterion for action. These calculations were made merely to show that there are good hotels and bad hotels on Skid Row and that the men themselves are aware of this. When plans are made to renew Skid Row areas, thought should be given to capitalizing upon the knowledge and experience of the good operators instead of making the mistaken assumption that all are bad. By the same token, care should be taken to avoid listening to the counsel of operators whose record is not good.

## C. WHAT HOMELESS MEN THINK OF EACH OTHER

Exploratory and experimental work had already hinted that homeless men felt very little sentimental attachment for each other. To test this hypothesis, the question, "What do you think of the other men who live on this street?" was included in the interview. The results, shown in Table 5-7, reveal that 40 percent of the respondents showed open dislike for the other men and an additional 26 percent were unenthusiastically noncommittal or ambivalent in their responses. Thus, less than one-third of the men said they liked other homeless men. The level of

dislike was higher on West Madison Street than in other Skid Row areas. The men who live in single rooms tend to dissociate themselves from Skid Row, and hence were considerably above-average in showing dislike for the other residents. Heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts showed a level of dislike for their fellows that was as high as that of controlled drinkers.

Table 5-7. WHAT HOMELESS MEN THINK OF OTHER HOMELESS MEN ON SKID ROW

| Like or dislike | Skid Row total | Acceptance of Skid Row living | | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Accepts | Rejects | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Don't like other homeless men | 40 | 13 | 49 | 44 | 38 | 38 | 44 | 42 |
| Noncommital or ambivalent | 26 | 23 | 27 | 26 | 28 | 26 | 23 | 27 |
| Like other homeless men | 31 | 60 | 22 | 29 | 33 | 34 | 30 | 27 |
| No information | 2 | 4 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 4 |

However, when asked, "What do you (Is there anything that you) like about the men?" a very large percentage (85 percent) were able to think of at least something they liked about the Skid Row residents or that would express tolerance or sympathy with them. The things mentioned, according to frequency of mention, are:

| Things liked | Percent of men mentioning |
|---|---|
| Congeniality — friendly, good to talk to. . . . . | 41 |
| Security — they will help you when you need it . . | 20 |
| Empathy — respondent feels sorry for them, pities them . . . . . | 19 |
| Impersonality — don't ask questions, leave you alone . . . . . | 15 |
| Identification — they are my kind, like me . . . . | 12 |
| Industry — they work, earn their own way . . . . | 11 |

Some of the above categories, into which the multitude of responses were fitted, certainly do not specify traits or characteristics of the men. Instead, they reflect the kinds of things the respondents said when asked to say something nice about close neighbors for whom they have little feeling. Table 5-8 provides details by drinking classification. Alcoholic derelicts are more inclined than others to identify themselves with the Skid Row population and to find Skid Row men congenial companions.

Table 5-8. THINGS HOMELESS MEN LIKE ABOUT OTHER HOMELESS MEN ON SKID ROW

| Things liked | Skid Row total | Acceptance of Skid Row living | | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Accepts | Rejects | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Identification - "My kind," "Like me" | 12 | 17 | 10 | 9 | 10 | 8 | 17 | 17 |
| Congeniality - friendly, good to talk to | 41 | 56 | 37 | 36 | 44 | 38 | 37 | 55 |
| Security - will help you | 20 | 19 | 21 | 10 | 16 | 25 | 25 | 27 |
| Empathy - feel sorry for them, pity them | 19 | 13 | 20 | 19 | 12 | 16 | 30 | 22 |
| Impersonality - they don't ask questions, leave you alone, mind own business | 15 | 22 | 13 | 11 | 21 | 15 | 13 | 11 |
| Tolerance - don't care what you do, how you are dressed, how you look | 1 | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | 3 | 2 | 2 |
| Generosity - will give you money, drinks | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 |
| Industry - they work | 11 | 15 | 9 | 7 | 11 | 11 | 11 | 14 |
| Like, but reasons given are general vague | 8 | 4 | 9 | 11 | 10 | 4 | 11 | 2 |
| Nothing liked, no likes reported | 15 | 9 | 17 | 20 | 12 | 19 | 15 | 7 |
| No information | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 2 |

In contrast to the statistics just cited, when invited by the question, "What don't you (Is there anything that you don't) like about the other men who live on this street?" to state what they disliked about other homeless men, 93 percent of the respondents had at least one critical comment to make, and their complaints were quite specific and detailed. (For statistics, see Table 5-9.) Several of these criticisms were directed to all of the residents generally, while many of them were directed toward specific groups. The most common dislikes, according to frequency of mention, are:

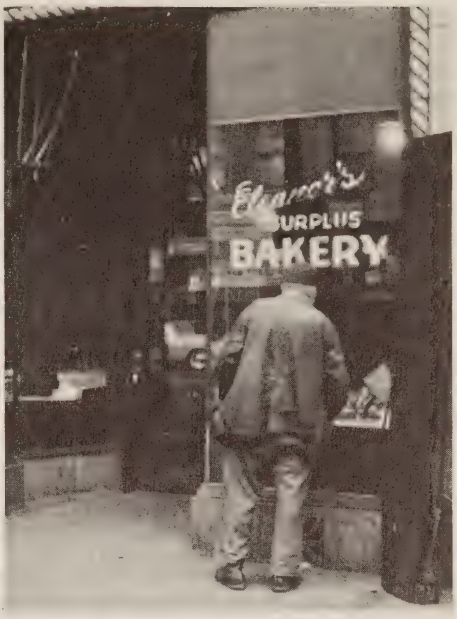
| Things disliked | Percent of men mentioning |
|---|---|
| Drinking — they drink too much | 63 |
| Begging — they bum you, look for a touch | 23 |
| Jackrolling — too many jackrollers | 21 |
| Other crime — numbers, rackets, theft | 18 |
| Laziness — lots of them won't work | 15 |
| Noisiness, rowdiness | 14 |
| Belligerence — they fight, bully each other, quarrel | 10 |
| Personal hygiene — they are dirty, not clean | 11 |
| Abnormal personalities — physically, mentally deteriorated | 10 |

| Things disliked | Percent of men mentioning |
|---|---|
| Coarse language — they talk roughly, loudly . . . | 6 |
| Filthy habits — spitting, public urinating, etc. . . | 6 |
| Lack of generosity — they won't help you . . . . . | 6 |
| Low cultural status — low level of intelligence . . | 5 |
| Dishonesty — they cheat, steal . . . . . | 4 |
| Lying, excessive bragging, false pretenses . . . | 3 |
| Unhealthy — they are diseased, not healthy. . . . | 3 |
| Unkempt appearance — they don't shave, bathe, take care of themselves . . . . . | 2 |

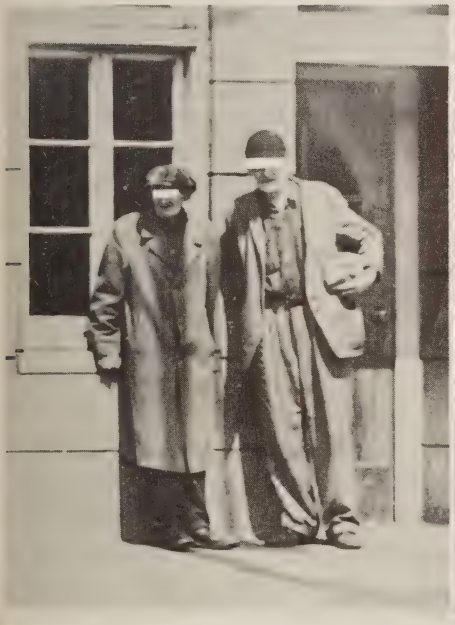
Table 5-9. THINGS HOMELESS MEN DISLIKE ABOUT OTHER HOMELESS MEN ON SKID ROW

| Things disliked | Skid Row total | Acceptance of Skid Row living | | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Accepts | Rejects | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Drinking - they drink too much | 63 | 54 | 66 | 74 | 68 | 51 | 64 | 60 |
| Begging - they bum you, look for a touch | 23 | 19 | 24 | 29 | 26 | 25 | 17 | 17 |
| Jackrolling - too many jackrollers. | 21 | 21 | 21 | 15 | 19 | 20 | 29 | 25 |
| Other crime - numbers rackets, theft | 18 | 13 | 19 | 23 | 19 | 15 | 13 | 20 |
| Personal hygiene - they are dirty, not clean | 11 | 5 | 13 | 5 | 11 | 14 | 15 | 6 |
| Derelicts, abnormal personalities - physical-mental deterioration, psychoneurotics | 10 | 3 | 12 | 10 | 6 | 9 | 14 | 15 |
| Low cultural status-low level of intellectual interests | 5 | 1 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| Laziness - lots of them won't work. | 15 | 8 | 17 | 12 | 12 | 14 | 21 | 15 |
| Belligerence - they fight, bully each other, quarrel | 10 | 9 | 11 | 18 | 9 | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| Dishonesty-they cheat, steal, not honest | 4 | 2 | 5 | ... | 1 | 7 | 5 | 12 |
| Unhealthy - they are diseased, not healthy | 3 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 6 | 4 |
| Race mixture-dislikes presence of other races, nationalities | 8 | 11 | 7 | 12 | 9 | 9 | 4 | 5 |
| Coarse language-dislikes language used | 6 | 3 | 8 | 10 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 4 |
| Filthy habits-spitting, public urinating, etc | 6 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 8 | 8 | 8 |
| Unkemp appearance, men do not shave | 2 | 2 | 2 | ... | 3 | 2 | 3 | ... |
| Noisiness, rowdiness of men | 14 | 13 | 14 | 19 | 14 | 12 | 11 | 15 |
| Transiency-here one day, gone the next | 2 | 6 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Lack of generosity-they won't help you | 6 | 1 | 7 | 10 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 8 |
| Lying, excessive bragging, false pretenses | 3 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 10 |
| Older men-dislikes so many old men. | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 | 3 | ... | 1 | 2 |
| Kids, young men-dislikes so many young men | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | ... | 2 | 6 |
| Vague-dislikes but reasons given vague | 1 | 2 | 1 | ... | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Nothing disliked, no dislikes reported | 12 | 23 | 8 | 12 | 11 | 15 | 9 | 10 |

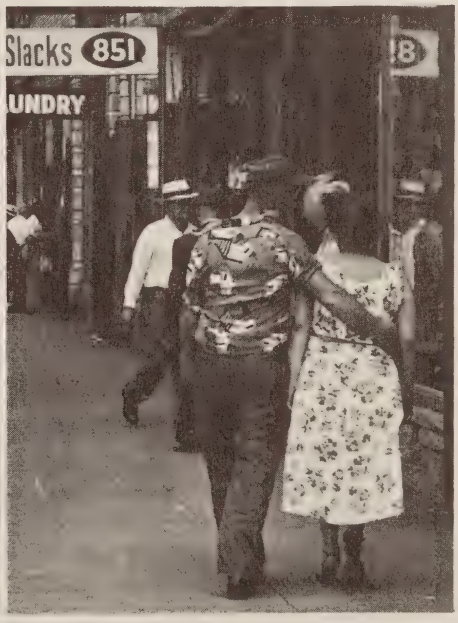
MOST MEN DO NOT FIND SKID ROW VERY THRILLING




TOO OFTEN THEY CANNOT AFFORD EVEN A LOAF OF STALE BREAD



THERE REALLY IS NOT MUCH TO DO OR ANYPLACE INTERESTING TO GO




A FEW MEN SPEND TIME WITH THE LADIES

As a further probe of this situation, each man was then asked, "How many close friends do you have here?" The results, as Table 5-10 shows, are that:

38 percent of the men have no close friends on Skid Row;
44 percent of the men have only a few close friends there;
16 percent of the men have a great many close friends there.

Those who reported having no close friends were then asked, "Why do you suppose you have not found any friends among the men here?" The answers received fell into four categories:

| Reasons for having no friends on Skid Row | Percent of men mentioning |
|---|---|
| I don't want to be friends with these men. . . . . | 62 |
| You can't trust these men. . . . . | 8 |
| These men are incapable of friendship. . . . . | 17 |
| I haven't been here long enough to make friends. | 11 |

This distribution of reactions was typical both of teetotalers and heavy drinkers. Alcoholic derelicts appeared to be more willing to make friends with other homeless men but emphasized that you cannot trust them.

If a respondent said that he had at least some friends or many friends on Skid Row, he was asked, "Are your friends different from the other men on the street? In what way?" About three-fourths of those who had friends claimed that these friends were different from the other men on the street:

| How are your friends different from other men on the street? | Percent of men mentioning |
|---|---|
| My friends are different . . . . . | 73 |
| I can trust my friends; they will help me if I need help . . . . . | 31 |
| My friends drink less than the others . . . . . | 20 |
| My friends work, work steadier . . . . . | 20 |
| My friends are more normal, more like other people . . . . . | 18 |
| My friends are better — cleaner, better dressed, better jobs . . . . . | 11 |
| My friends are not bums, do not beg . . . . . | 5 |
| My friends are not different . . . . . | 27 |

Table 5-10. FRIENDLINESS OF HOMELESS MEN FOR EACH OTHER

| Measures of friendship | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| NUMBER OF CLOSE FRIENDS..... | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Have no close friends on Skid Row..... | 38 | 42 | 36 | 39 | 41 | 31 |
| Have a few close friends on Skid Row..... | 44 | 51 | 49 | 39 | 35 | 46 |
| Have many close friends on Skid Row..... | 16 | 5 | 15 | 19 | 19 | 20 |
| No information on friends..... | 2 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 3 |
| REASONS FOR NO CLOSE FRIENDS.... | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Don't want to be friends with these men..... | 62 | 73 | 57 | 58 | 74 | 44 |
| You cannot trust these men..... | 8 | 7 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 23 |
| These men are not capable of real friendship..... | 17 | 18 | 19 | 23 | 8 | 19 |
| Have not been here long enough to make friends..... | 11 | 7 | 15 | 10 | 13 | 8 |
| Answered question on friends, but no reason for no close friends..... | 6 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 4 | 6 |
| HOW FRIENDS ARE DIFFERENT..... | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| My friends are not different.... | 27 | 33 | 24 | 25 | 27 | 29 |
| My friends drink less than the others..... | 20 | 33 | 22 | 16 | 17 | 11 |
| My friends work, work steadily.. | 19 | 23 | 17 | 25 | 13 | 18 |
| My friends are not bums, do not beg..... | 4 | 3 | 7 | 7 | ... | 3 |
| I can trust my friends; they will help me..... | 31 | 14 | 26 | 37 | 41 | 38 |
| My friends are "better" than others-cleaner, better dressed better jobs..... | 11 | 5 | 13 | 16 | 10 | 8 |
| My friends are more "normal," more like other people..... | 17 | 20 | 25 | 15 | 17 | 3 |
| Answered question on friends-but no information on how friends are different..... | 4 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 4 | 10 |

## II. SUMMARY MEASURES OF REACTION TO SKID ROW LIVING

It is possible that the separate consideration of each of several specific questions may fail to portray accurately the over-all feeling about Skid Row life which the men have. In other words, we want to catch the total attitude of each man with respect to this feeling. It may be that a man who says he dislikes Skid Row living would then proceed to disprove himself by answers to other items which would suggest that he enjoys it very much. He might say he dislikes the men and then reveal by other responses that he is closely integrated into Skid Row life and has a high sense of "belonging." To avoid these contradictions we need

to have some generalized ratings, based on the pattern of responses to several different questions throughout the interview.

Two approaches to the construction of such summary measures were taken in this study: (1) clinical coding, and (2) machine scoring.

The first of these approaches is similar to one a clinical psychologist might take toward these materials; for this reason it is called "clinical coding." The procedure requires that the coder read carefully the man's responses to several items, consider them collectively, and on the basis of all information available, arrive at a judgment. This goes a step beyond the usual coding and "programs" the brain of the coder not only to categorize single responses, but also to evaluate them and to integrate them into broader and more theoretical classifications. The specifications of the categories were written out in detail, and the coders were instructed as to the theoretical bases of the classifications and as to the interpretation to be placed on particular types of responses. Inasmuch as all coders were graduate students in sociology with extensive training in social psychology, the above approach was feasible.

This way of making summary measures is frankly subjective; subjectivity is its strength as well as its weakness. A properly instructed person is capable of weighing complex evidence, searching for hidden clues, and arriving at hairline decisions, whereas a machine does only as it is told, and cannot look for or make allowance for special supplementary information. If the subjective factor is supervised for validity and reliability, this approach produces data that is extremely useful for scientific inquiry. By writing out the specifications for the use of all coders, and by making consistency checks and quality checks on the results, it is not difficult to keep variance of the subjectivity factor within the necessary limits.

The machine-scoring approach is well known. All of the possible combinations of responses to a series of questions are grouped into a few general categories.

Three sets of summary measures were constructed. Two of these were arrived at by the clinical-coding approach and one by the machine-scoring approach.

Total Attitude toward Skid Row (clinical coding). — The entire interview, including those subjects presented in Chapter 4 and in this chapter, provided data which would show whether the response tabulated in Table 5-1 ("How do you feel about living on West Madison Street, etc.") was consistent with the other responses given by the same man. A synthesis of these materials determined which of three categories applied to each man's attitude: "over-all like," "indifference," or "over-all dislike." The results of this rating, cross-tabulated by drinking classification, are reported in Table 5-11.

Table 5-11. SUMMARY MEASURES OF REACTION TO SKID ROW LIVING, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION

| Summary measure | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| TOTAL ATTITUDE | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Likes living there | 29.8 | 33.1 | 35.0 | 30.8 | 22.0 | 24.3 |
| Indifferent | 8.1 | 8.5 | 8.5 | 11.2 | 5.3 | 5.2 |
| Dislikes living there | 62.1 | 58.5 | 56.5 | 58.1 | 72.7 | 70.5 |
| DEGREE OF INTEGRATION | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Assimilated | 21.8 | 10.2 | 17.4 | 23.7 | 23.1 | 36.6 |
| Accommodated | 28.2 | 27.0 | 21.0 | 32.4 | 35.3 | 27.3 |
| Aloof | 38.6 | 38.5 | 51.5 | 32.7 | 33.1 | 27.8 |
| Withdrawn | 11.5 | 24.2 | 10.2 | 11.2 | 8.5 | 8.3 |
| ACCEPTANCE OF SKID ROW | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Complete acceptance and integration | 6.0 | 3.0 | 10.3 | 7.8 | 2.4 | 1.9 |
| Partial acceptance and integration | 18.1 | 19.2 | 18.7 | 17.6 | 15.0 | 21.7 |
| Partial rejection | 53.5 | 54.2 | 51.6 | 53.3 | 56.3 | 53.5 |
| Complete rejection | 22.3 | 23.6 | 19.5 | 21.2 | 26.4 | 22.9 |

Only 3 out of each 10 men interviewed were rated by the coders as actively liking Skid Row, and 6 out of each 10 were rated as actively disliking it. The percentage of men disliking Skid Row was substantially higher among the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts than among the teetotalers, light drinkers, and moderate drinkers. Comparatively few men were rated as indifferent. Thus, the over-all diagnosis of the coders is in substantial agreement with Table 5-1. Dislike for Skid Row was a theme which pervaded the entire interview.

Acceptance of Skid Row Living (machine scoring). — A classification was made for use on the tabulating machine from the combination of the responses to four questions concerning (1) liking for living on Skid Row, (2) liking for hotel, (3) liking for the men, and (4) number of friends. The four-fold classification of acceptance or rejection of Skid Row is as follows:

Complete acceptance. — Man likes living on Skid Row, likes the hotel in which he lives, likes the men, and has many close friends here.

Partial acceptance. — (Applies to those remaining after the "complete acceptance" group was identified.) Man likes living on Skid Row, has at least a few close friends here, may or may not like his lodging place, and may or may not express liking for the men generally.

Complete rejection. — Man dislikes Skid Row life, dislikes the hotel in which he lives, has no close friends or only a few close

friends here, and dislikes the men.

Partial rejection. — (Applies to those remaining after the "complete rejection" group was identified.) Man dislikes Skid Row life, may like or dislike the hotel in which he is living, may like or dislike the men, and may have a few close friends here.

The machines tabulated results that are quite similar to the coders' results. Only about $\frac{1}{4}$ of the men accepted the Skid Row type of living, compared with $\frac{3}{4}$ who rejected it. Only 6 percent could be rated as completely accepting the Skid Row life, while more than 20 percent completely rejected it. The machine-scoring approach showed no marked difference between the teetotalers and heavy drinkers, although the men in these extreme classifications were rated as being a little less able to accept Skid Row life than the light drinkers and moderate drinkers. The major value of this rating is its objective demonstration that only about $\frac{1}{16}$ of the men really accept their life, but in being critical of it or disliking it, a large percentage are able to find some good elements in it. The hard-core 22 percent that liked absolutely no part of it was not concentrated in any particular drinking classification.

Degree of Integration and Self-Identification with Skid Row (clinical coding). — After reading the man's account of his typical day (see Chapter 4) and the responses to the questions pertaining to liking the other men, friendships, recreation, and use of Skid Row facilities for social life, the coders were asked to assign each man to one of the following categories which rated the degree to which the man is integrated and identified with Skid Row life.

a. Assimilated. — Man is well-integrated, feels he "belongs," identifies himself with Skid Row and with the other men on the street, is a full participant. He regularly makes use of employment agencies and taverns and/or participates in the social life in the hotel lobby. Interacts freely with other men. Considers bums and jackrollers as a bad part of Skid Row, but the other men are O. K.

b. Accommodated. — Man is a rather marginal participant in Skid Row activities, but is tolerant, mildly friendly, or sympathetic toward the Skid Row population. Probably chose this area for the low cost of living and wishes he could go elsewhere, but has established a set of living arrangements and finds them tolerable. Does not loaf much with the men, either in taverns or in hotel lobby, but gets along with them and has a small circle of acquaintances.

c. Aloof. — Man has only casual, impersonal contacts with the other men. Does not join in Skid Row social activities. Is here for convenience of work, cost, or other personal reasons. Re-

gards himself as "better" or "different" in comparison with the other men. Friendly with almost no one but his one or two particular friends on Skid Row.

d. Withdrawn. — Man lives completely apart. Avoids other Skid Row residents, has nothing to do with them. Spends the entire time in the hotel alone, or converses only when forced by circumstances. Has no close friends on Skid Row.

Using these definitions, the coders classified only 22 percent of the men as "assimilated," and an additional 28 percent as "accommodated." The remaining 50 percent were either "aloof" or "withdrawn." By this rating, the teetotalers and light drinkers are considerably less well assimilated than are the moderate and heavy drinkers. This is in part a matter of definition, for frequent commingling with the men in the taverns and an open liking for the tavern night life was an item used to indicate a high degree of assimilation into Skid Row, at least in one of its aspects. Thus, despite their high level of dislike for Skid Row living, more than one-third of the alcoholic derelicts were rated as being assimilated. This is probably justified as it refers to their feelings toward the other men rather than to the physical setting. Some men who dislike the setting seem to be able to feel some group cohesion and camaraderie with their fellow residents, perhaps because, socio-economically, they are all adrift in the same boat.

Taken as a whole, the summary measures overwhelmingly support the contention that the answer to "What do homeless men think of Skid Row living?" is that they hate it! This verdict is shared by controlled and uncontrolled drinkers alike. Moreover, these men have so little "we-feeling" that it seems almost a contradiction in terms to speak of a "Skid Row society."

## III. QUOTATIONS....

Most of the men interviewed tried hard to convey a picture of what their life was like, and how much they liked or disliked it. They seemed to feel that at long last they were getting a chance to tell the world outside about their way of life. The statistical tabulations that have been presented and analyzed above cannot convey fully the feeling that lay behind their responses. In order to correct this deficiency, quotations have been selected from the interviews, and are reproduced here in four groups. Each of these major groups is broken down into two subgroups, one dealing with positive and one dealing with negative responses.

Group A. Attitudes toward Skid Row in General
- A-1. Things disliked
- A-2. Things liked

Group B. Attitudes toward Hotels
- B-1. Things disliked
- B-2. Things liked

Group C. Attitudes toward Other Men on Skid Row
- C-1. Things disliked
- C-2. Things liked

Group D. Friendships on Skid Row
- D-1. Why respondent has no friends
- D-2. How friends are different from other Skid Row men

Here are some of the things the men said:

### Group A-1. ATTITUDES TOWARD SKID ROW IN GENERAL: THINGS DISLIKED

It's the crummiest spot in the state. It should be torn down, abolished, done away with. The filth, and I'm in the middle of it. Oh, the over-all picture. They should clean up the place. When I read that in the paper about tearing down the street I thought that was the best idea they ever had. The restaurants are filthy. Lots of dirt and grime. It could be changed if somebody put their foot down. There isn't anything good about it.

I don't like to walk on the street and have everybody ask for five cents for a bottle of wine. I don't think old age pensioners should be allowed to get a room and spend rent money for wine. It's all jackrollers and stuff around. If they would do away with the soup lines more men would want to go to work.

The lowest class live around here. I ain't no angel, but I like to live halfway decent. I don't want to get acquainted. The more friends you got the more they bleed you for money. The hotel is decent, but it's the people. I got to be here because I don't get a steady salary. If you've got no jobs, you've got to live around these neighborhoods. Things are pretty cheap around here.

There's no such thing as liking it. This place is far from a rose, if you know what I mean. Most guys are animals around here. Oh God, nobody likes it. They could burn down the whole street and we'd all be better off.

Bad reputation of the neighborhood. The drunkards, the dirt in the

neighborhood, the prostitutes, thefts. I don't like the idea that people think that because we live here because of necessity we are just like the others. I'm ashamed to live here.

I accept the street; I don't like it. I have presently no choice. It is cheap living. Work is scarce. It is just a lower level of living. You can get more here for a dollar: a bed to sleep and some soup. This is considered the street of hopeless men, the rock bottom of society. However, you can retain your own respectability if you want. I dislike it for what it does for the men. I like it here because you can come and go; you are subject to no control.

There's no social life, no family life. Here you are by yourself. You see a lot of drinking here.

If you stay to yourself it is as good as any other street. If you start mingling, you get in trouble. As much money as I get, I can live and exist. If I'd get better wages, I would like to live someplace else.

I don't like it, truthfully, but it's a case of necessity. So many things (not liked). All this drinking, panhandling, swearing at one another; I don't like that. Lots of these fellas think I draw my pay check on Saturday and am supposed to divide it up with 'em. And because I don't they think I'm a heel. I don't go out much, don't mingle with the men. I don't feel superior; I just don't care to mix with them.

A man never gets no rest around here. When I go up to bed I don't get to sleep because of the noise upstairs. Another thing, the small globes, you can't read a paper in your room.

Well it's dangerous to walk down the street after dark for one thing. Quite a few of these gentlemen aren't particular in taking overcoat or what have you. You might wind up in the hospital for being assaulted.

I don't like the rooms. They're open on top. I'd like a little privacy and a little comfort. I don't booze around and I don't get along with the drinking bunch. But there are a lot of nice fellows in this hotel. It's not a desirable place to live. It's a place where a fellow can go when he gets up against it.

This is not my environment. This is the street of forgotten men. These people are lost. I like to be with people, but not with these. I like nothing, absolutely nothing, about Skid Row. It's just that I must stay here.

People who live in better neighborhoods think all people here are no good, but people have to live according to their income. There's a little danger around here. Some people will put a knife in your neck if you don't watch out. If a guy looking for a job gives an address around here

they think you're a bum and won't hire you. If I could afford it I'd live in a high class neighborhood.

A man who lives down here is a downcast. He's beat before you start. The people you have to associate with; they're always looking for a drink. And I used to do the same thing. When I came out of the hospital I turned Christian. I quit drinkin'. When I told the guys, they thought I was psycho. They tried everything under the sun to get me to drink, but I wouldn't do it. You know, they call you all kinds of names if you don't drink. And I used to do the same thing. Well, I don't like living in a dump like this. It's noisy as hell around here. Drunks are fighting. If you go to the bathroom you might come back and not have anything left in your room. It lowers your social standing. Sure, if I had money I wouldn't live here, but what are you going to do? Well, I can't think of anything I like about living here. I'd have to think awhile.

Too many jackrollers and drunkards. They call you s.o.b. and m.f. Forgive me for saying it. I don't like that kind of language. I'm gonna hit 'em with my cane. (pensioner)

I'm just livin' here 'cause I ain't got no money. It's not suitable for me. You don't want to mix with everybody. This is just a place you come by; you don't stay here. But if you ain't got no money, you're stuck.

Too many guys drinking, so I start too. Outside of that the men are all right: good and bad, the same as anywhere else.

I can't like anything about it. It's a place you go when there's nowhere else for you, when you can't have money and you've got to have liquor.

Too many robbers. You get hell knocked out of you when you get gassed up, and guys mooching you all the time.

Dirt, filth. No one is down there except trash. They have no training and no breeding. Most of the men are no-good two-legged animals. They have very low intelligence. I hate them. There is nothing they wouldn't do, rob, lie, cheat.

It was all right until the hillbillies started coming in. They spoiled it.

Well, I don't like it, but in my position a guy has to take what he gets. I live on this street because I have to. It makes you ashamed of your own race. Any guy with any pride wouldn't find anything worthwhile here.

You walk down the street and somebody may stop and pound the daylights out of you. You take a chance on your life. That's why there's so many crippled people in the lobby.

You gotta be careful. If you show a $5 or $10 bill there's eyes all over it.

The filth and type of people. Too many degenerates live here. They drink too much.

I'm not around much (works steady at night). I like the hotel, the cleanliness. The clerks are very helpful and congenial. I've seen three fellows die this week. Drop dead. On the bridge. I'd stop some of these saloons that sell the poison. I don't like it, but after all, I'm just a little guy.

Want my real honest-to-God opinion? When a guy is down and out it's cheap. If I had a good job I wouldn't be here twenty-four hours. I sure don't like it. Well, it's just entirely too dirty. And I don't like to be around dumps. Well, I think that would cover it.

I don't like the cages. I would like to have my own housekeeping room.

You just ain't nothing. You're always feeling low.

Dislike only one thing, them God-damned niggers (State Street).

I guess deep down what I don't like about it is what you yourself wouldn't like about it. All the sordidness, dirt, filth; oh, the people, the hotels, everything.

Well, it's just the bottom. You gotta be drunk to stay on this street.

Well, it's the class of people. You find quite a few hoodlums. They take advantage of a fella when he is intoxicated, knock 'em in the head and rob them. Also, it's a slum neighborhood with old dilapidated buildings. There are some hoodlums right in this hotel.

It's the environment. When I go to the washroom, if my door is unlocked, somebody comes and steals my clothes.

### Group A-2. ATTITUDES TOWARD SKID ROW IN GENERAL: THINGS LIKED

The hotels are clean and the beds are clean and the rent is cheap. You can go in the restaurants and eat and pay half what you would farther down in town. If any drunks come around they (hotels) throw them out.

I like it because I'm against anything fashionable. I like plain (simple) living.

I like the convenience of transportation, the reasonable rent, and the shopping. You can buy clothes and musical records cheap.

If I go any other place, they'll throw me out. I used to have a good home like you do. Pretty soon I'll kick the bucket myself. As far as work goes, I can work, if I get the wine out of my stomach. You got to live down here. The guys down here work with you. Last week I got some money. Next week I'll get it from somebody else. We're Madison Street bums. Where'm I gonna go? I ain't got no family.

I was born in the neighborhood. Lived here most all my life. I find no fault in it.

You can live down here pretty cheap. Nobody pays any attention to you if you take care of your own business.

It's reasonable. I can get by on a couple of dollars a day. Actually, there's nothing else (I like).

You can always get a drink here when you can't anyplace else. You can be here when a man gets down filthy dirty and can't go to a decent part of town.

It's a question of economy with me. All the kinds of jobs I can get is spot labor now and then, and I can't make enough money out of it to stay anywhere else.

Live the way you want. You don't have to be rich to be around here. If you can't change suits every day people don't look at you like you're crazy.

A man can get used to anything. I'm calloused; it's a way of life to me now.

It's cheaper. You can get by with less money. A little better place to look for work. There are more employment offices to look for work.

When a man's on relief, you gotta live where it's cheap.

It's cheap. Lots of good people here. Some of the bartenders are friendly. The restaurant man is friendly. Food is cheap. I don't have to go far to go to my job. The hotel is clean and service is good here. They call me in the morning. I can borrow money from these people if I need any. The boys are good.

Well, I can't afford the money to go out to get a room. If I could afford it, I'd move back to Evanston.

It's free and easy. You can get up in the morning and can do what you want. Nobody asks questions.

I don't like it here but I always come back. I don't know why. I don't know what happens. I think it is just a weakness of the individual. If a

man is healthy, he wouldn't do it.

It's cheap, and would you believe it, there's a lot of good guys down here. It's a good place to make friends.

The only reason I'm down here is all my friends are down here. Most of them do the same kind of work I do. In this district you can go in a tavern and a woman is going to solicit you. Further west you can't do that.

I feel all right. I live here twenty years. It's all right; I like it here. I like my job. I eat. A little drink. Like sleeping here. No, no, I like everything long as I can stay here. I like everybody, because everybody let me live, don't do me no damage. I work for my living, everybody be my friend. (Polish immigrant)

If you don't have a steady job you can go to the mission houses. It's not much, but it keeps you from starving.

You can get free bed and soup. It's all right if you ain't got nothing else. (Is staying in a mission)

I guess subconsciously I feel that I can do all the drinkin' I want and none of my people will know about it.

When you're on the bum you can get a cheap place to stay. You can get spot jobs there; you can always run into someone who might stake you.

No use to kick (about Skid Row); I gotta like it. I was living at _____, but I didn't have no money, so I had to leave the room and that's why I came here. I make this my home. I can't do no better. I'm an old man now. It's cheap. I make up my mind to like anything. (71 years old) (resigned)

It seems almost like home to me. When I came up from the South, I first landed here. It's like home here. The only reasons I say I really like it 'cause there are more colored people here. (Is a Negro)

It's a free life. That's about all. You can do more or less as you like, be away from society and the social life.

It's all right (on Skid Row). You don't bother nobody; nobody bothers you. They're not too bad. A lot don't care if they never work and don't try.

You can meet good friends here. I think everybody is friendly here, more so than in any other part of Chicago.

I enjoy it in a way. I just sort of have a habit of coming here. It's like a cycle. I can just about adjust to any place. Things here are just all right. You talk to the men here and it's a place where you can get work. It seems you want to come back to the same stamping grounds.

## Group B. ATTITUDES TOWARD HOTELS: THINGS DISLIKED

I don't like to live in a barn like this. If I wasn't a drunken man I would not be here.

I've been here since October and the maid swept the room once, but puts clean sheets on every Monday. You can't carry money, or if you do you'll get knocked in the head. Sanitary conditions ain't so good here. I can't sleep here unless I'm drunk. The toilets are no good. The maid is as lazy as hell. All she wants to do is f--- if you got $3. The toilet is unsanitary. Most of the time the stools won't flush.

They got all those tramps coming up. They fall off the commode, and I say to myself what am I doing here? It's just out and out just plain no good. It's no place for anybody that's got sense.

They're drinking in their rooms, making noise and trouble. They don't go to washrooms, do it in their rooms. There's no ceiling, just chicken coops. The air comes in from floor and ceiling. If men do in their rooms what they should do in the washrooms, how can you like it?

Guys talking all night to themselves. Somebody vomiting on the floor. You don't know if somebody's going to urinate on your floor.

If a man lives in a place like this hotel he can't respect hisself. Guess a man doesn't care about anything if he comes here. Nothing I like about it except the cheap rates. Lots of these people have bad diseases, have t.b. They should be in hospitals. You have to mix with everybody and put up with them.

I don't like to sit around in the lobby with these drunks. The beds aren't clean. They fight and raise hell all night upstairs and I can't sleep.

Washbasins have no soap, no cleanser or nothing to clean the bowl. Most of the guys use the same towels. It's filthy. It's no wonder guys get sores on their faces.

I don't like the cages. There is very little privacy. The men snore, some are drunk. It's lots of noise around here.

They should make this thing fireproof. We seen these other persons burned to death and they shouldn't allow any wineheads in this place.

It is room just to turn around. It is noisy and crowded. I get headaches here. This place here is a firetrap — there is no adequate fire safety. Lots of the clerks are hustlers for the colored girls (cleaning maids).

Noise and drunks. They come in all hours of the night drunk. It's dirty and there is no privacy.

They're all just somewhere to get in out of the rain. They're dirty and cramped — no real place to live. It's obvious, isn't it?

Some of these hotels are a disgrace. It's the men who make the hotel.

I don't like to live together with these people. It is dirty, horrible. I don't like anything about it. If I only could get out of it.

It's a crummy joint, should be abolished. It's a dirty, filthy place.

There's bed bugs. Too much noise.

You can't get no rest. You take a chance of gettin' robbed or cut to pieces.

It's quite a bit of drinking and noise on weekends. They don't seem to do much about it. If they tried to stop everybody they wouldn't have anybody here.

I just don't like these flophouses. With me it's a have-to case. Well, I don't go for so much drinkin'. They're harmless, but they're not all clean. But this hotel is as clean as any of 'em.

You hardly ever get clean sheets.

It's dirty and there are drunks and bums bothering you all the time. They make a lot of noise. Always coming around asking for money or telling you stories.

I'll tell you: You get up at night to go to the toilet. You can't find a seat. They're sitting with a gallon of wine drinking. What you gonna like about it? You know how them bird cages are; you heard about 'em.

### Group B-2. ATTITUDES TOWARD HOTELS: THINGS LIKED

I'm well treated, no one bothers me. Always got hot water to take a bath. Always got a towel and the people seem to be 100 percent courteous. Maid service is excellent; clean sheets and everything.

Here it is fireproof. Other hotels burn up.

There's a good TV set, it's clean, there is plenty of reading material. In general, I'd say it is a little better than the average. It's centrally located, the church is nearby. I've never heard of anyone losing any-

thing in this hotel. Fellows have lost things in quite a few of these other places. As soon as I better myself, naturally I'll move.

It is clean, well managed. I have about a 60-watt bulb and can read. They also grant me rent for 2-3 days if I run out of money. They know I will repay.

I can do my drinkin' here — come in, do what I want — nobody bothers you. Nothing I do like about this hotel. I'm only here because I don't think I could make it someplace else and carry on like I do.

It's the cheapest I can find and close to some friends. Good heat and hot water. More clean than some.

I like the owner. The room is rather clean. There is a kitchen where we can cook some meals. The other tenants are very good people. We are sure the owner is careful not to accept bad tenants. There is nothing wrong for the price I pay.

They have a lounge where you can set down and relax. They have plenty of hot water, where you can shave. The clerks are nice.

I think it is pretty good for the kind it is. I think it is one of the best. It's cheap, good service, clean most of the time.

The bathroom is bigger than most and there are absolutely no bugs. It's still a cage place, though, and not enough privacy.

The hotel is clean and service is good here. They call me in the morning.

It's all right; I got to sleep somewhere. It's a place to sleep in the wintertime. It doesn't do me any good to dislike this place.

The hotel is all right. As far as the clerk you were talking to, he's very nice, and the key hop treats me nice. The whole management is nice.

The manager is all right and treats me okay.

I like the cleanliness. If I'm short, they'll carry me for a day or two and let me catch up.

I'm broke. I gotta live. I gotta be in the cheapest place I can. There are some good friends here.

I like it better than some other places. It's got a nice lobby. There's a place in the basement to wash clothes. Shower baths.

It is clean. You are like chickens in a cage. But there are new showers — the men can keep clean.

It's got the rest of them beat. I prefer this to any other. They keep order, it is quiet, it is clean, they don't allow drunks in here.

This is fireproof and most around here are firetraps.

I like the price — that's the only reason.

It's a place under cover. I mean it's out of the rain. I can't think of another thing, believe me. There ain't enough room to turn around. There's cockroaches, but no bedbugs.

I got no real good room, but it's cheap rents. Got nice old mans live here. Very quiet here. No drunks and robbers (rooming house).

I picked up a woman. She knew the hotel — so I stayed here — she moved out. It's convenient to the jobs I do — the freight docks, etc. I don't like the cockroaches and I do hate having Puerto Ricans next to me.

It's cheap, period.

It's cheap and you can get inside and keep warm and dry.

The rent is reasonable; it's quiet, and the people don't bother me. It's generally pretty clean. I would like better maid service. I wish the room was dusted better and the windows were cleaner (hotel with rooms).

Only thing is that it's cheap and clean. It's very clean and warm in winter. It's cheaper than any other place. I'd rather live someplace else, but can't afford it.

### Group C-1. ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHER MEN ON SKID ROW: THINGS DISLIKED

They're derelicts — they got loose cogs. Either been in a pen or committed some crime.

They spend their money on wine and have to "carry the banner" we call it. They have to walk the streets or find someplace to stay. I feel sorry for people, but you can't help everybody. Another thing, they are always on the bum.

They're just a bunch of winos. They'll kill you for just a dime, and you've got to be drunk to stand 'em.

They got a bunch of bums around here. They drink in the alleys and panhandle people on the streets. There's nothing I like about the men on this street.

I don't like the wine heads and undesirable people — those that use dope and stuff. The dope guys and drunks, just keep them off and it would be

all right.

The guys don't care what they do. They take everything; just as soon attack you.

There are some pitiful cases down here. They're an awful sight. They could stand some sort of rehabilitation program.

Ninety percent of them just don't care. There's a few who are just down on their luck. They're conscientious guys. As a whole the others just want to drink, get a flop. Don't want to work. What can you do with guys like that? Well, I can't put up with guys like that.

These men don't have respect for property. They don't respect other people's ideas. They are very set in their way of life. The older ones are callous, hard men. Religion for them is mockery. They go to services only to gain something.

They are good men where they are sober, but they are full most of the time.

You've got moochers, drunks, jackrollers. You've got to be careful down here. You can't stay out too late at night.

They're crum-bums down here. My type don't belong here. There's lots of jackrollers. You stay here and you lower yourself deeper and deeper. Just as soon as my arm is well I'll be on my way. The Welfare sent me here. They picked out the hotel and the eating place. Madison Street is where they sent me.

They are all raising hell and drunk. You have to be drunk to get along with them. They are dirty. Nine out of ten of them won't take a job. They want to be bumming.

If you have money you have friends.

I don't like nothing about them, just nothing. I don't want any part of them. They are lone animals — dirty, whiney. I don't associate with anybody.

They are for themselves. Looking from one day to the next to get money from you. These are the younger men. The older pensioners are all right.

They should keep most of these men in their cages. They'll never change. They spit on the floor, throw razor blades on the floor. They are just filthy, crummy. They don't even use the showers. The only nice ones are the old pensioners. Their children are married, so they live here. They don't bother nobody.

They are pitiful people. You can't love them. They kill each other and drink too much and spend the nights in bars and out on the streets. They quarrel too much.

They strong arm you. I've seen as many as four a night right under my window. You can befriend these people but they show no appreciation.

You know the kind of people who live here? Wife deserters, thiefs, winos, chronic drunks. They get drunk and want to fight with you. There isn't anything I like about them.

A sane man would like to have other sane men around him. I don't smoke, drink, play cards or horses and that's the kind of people who live on this street.

I don't like the dope fiends in the streets and the jackrollers. I was not raised this way; I don't like this type of people.

They take goofballs, any kind of dope like paregoric — whatever they can get.

The drunkards and the guys that don't work. Also the hillbillies, but they would be all right if they didn't have a chip on their shoulder. They still think they are fighting the Civil War.

A lot of these guys impose on somebody else. All they do is wait for another guy to get his pay check. I don't like it.

They steal. I don't like to be around a bunch like that — they're too rough for me.

Some have crazy ideas — if they have liquor, they don't talk sensibly.

Those type of guys are always driftin'. They go their way and you go yours.

I object to the hillbillies — they jackroll.

I like nothing about the men on Skid Row. They continue drinking every day. They don't consider getting a steady job and getting off. Once down there they stay there year after year. They know they're bums. It's just a low class of people. They are rough, crude and loud.

### Group C-2. ATTITUDES TOWARD OTHER MEN ON SKID ROW: THINGS LIKED

They are just like me. They are every day drunk, and go borrowin' money to buy a bottle. I like 'em. I live with them. They draw their U.C. (unemployment compensation) and they share with others. They are just good guys, that's all. They'll help me when I'm in need. One

time one fellow paid my room. I'll pay him back later.

They are pretty good fellows to talk to — they talk about life, politics, working conditions, living conditions, and everything.

The older people are fair and considerate. They are very understanding. They listen to your conversation, will appreciate your conversation.

These are poor working people just like I am. They try to help each other and get along with one another. You got some that are no good for nothing. Some wouldn't work in a pie factory tasting pies. I don't like the sickness here.

I like 'em 'cause I feel they're the underdog. The alcohol is against them — they're like me.

I like the working people and the retired railway men.

They're mostly old ex-soldiers — talk the same language with them. Well, I guess they're just like me. It's a street where everyone helps one another. It's live and let live. We all have a drinking problem.

They'll help each other. If one man's short, another'll help him out.

I like the men; they work.

They're all right. These old pensioners gotta have a place to live. It's better for them here than in an old folks home.

They same like me — have to stay someplace because people here very poor — they have to be here. I got to stay here; can't run away from here now. (Man never drinks; has lived in cubicle hotels for 20 years.)

They're honest workingmen. Been living with them all my life.

There's some nice people here — hard working. They work in the summer and come here in winter. I enjoy talking with them. You got to kill the time.

They are sick fellows and they need help. They want some relief and they get drunk to get it. I like them. When I got money I buy them a drink and they do the same for me.

They're hard luck men and all kinds of 'em. They're extra friendly down here. They've got time to be friendly I guess. We all stick together.

I'd as soon live here as anywhere else. Here you always bump into somebody you know.

Some are hard-working people like me who just try to get along. They

don't like it, either. They are trying to get by but they work. Some don't work and don't want to work. They would rather rob you or hit you on the head. They are dirty bums.

Well, they feel pretty close to one another. They try to help each other. If one don't have no food, the other will share with him.

Companionship, guys in same shape I am. We're all hurtin'. Lots of 'em is trying to get out, hoping for work. We don't seem to click.

I like the workmen; they're sociable and easy to talk to. Good companions, no false ideas and they're generous. I'm not talking about the parasites. I don't like those who don't and won't work — always in the taverns looking for a live one with money. They're stem bums.

I like a poor man, because I am poor myself.

They always share what they have with you.

These guys are o.k. They're just down and out like me. They'll help you when you ain't got nothin'.

There's some good and bad men here. They are tough, but when they get drinking, sometimes they get to fighting. But if you don't bother them, they don't bother you. They're pretty nice fellows.

Some of them are fine men. They just don't have a job and are here looking for work. They keep out of trouble and don't drink much. Others aren't good for anything. They're drunk most of the time or they're chasing after women. They can't save their money.

You take a man that's sober. They've had lots of interesting things in their lives. As a general rule they come from nice Christian homes. Some of 'em have had upsets in their lives and got to drinking to drown their sorrows. The general run is good when they're sober.

The only answer I can give you is we're all alkies (alcoholics). Birds of a feather flock together.

### Group D-1. FRIENDSHIPS ON SKID ROW: WHY RESPONDENT HAS NO FRIENDS

You have plenty of friends as long as you have money. When you run out of money you ain't got friends. I don't want no friends, always on you, "gimme," "have you got."

Oh, I ain't got no friends, just people I know. Well, you know how it is; everybody likes to be by themselves.

You can't trust them or believe them. All they want is your money.

They are just acquaintances. They try to be friendly, but they don't mean it. They only try to get something out of you.

Because I've been exclusive for three or four years. My wife died; my son is in the hospital injured during the war. So I felt like staying by myself with my books.

I don't want any friends. They're drunk all the time; you can't trust any of them.

I never tried to make any friends. Don't want them for my friends. 'Cause they're winos. It would cost me too much money.

I don't know (why has no friends). That's human nature.

You can sit around and talk but you couldn't make a real friend down here, someone you could depend on. You can never trust a drunk. I ought to know (laughs). I'm one.

You can't be friends down there. All they want to know is if you got enough to buy a jug.

I'm not here long enough to make friends.

No, I wouldn't say close friends. I have close friends in other parts of Chicago. But some of 'em are good company. I never get too personal with them. You know, talk to 'em, invite 'em to the room. Have a glass of beer with them.

### Group D-2. FRIENDSHIPS ON SKID ROW: HOW FRIENDS ARE DIFFERENT FROM OTHER SKID ROW MEN

The men I know don't meddle with the rotten class. They can hold a straight conversation. They talk intelligently. The others don't have any respect for themselves or anybody else.

One is an engineer and another's well educated but down on his hub.

Yes, they are cleaner, take care of themselves. They will loan you money. You can talk sensibly to them. They are not drunk all the time.

If you need a dollar they will give you a dollar. They don't throw their money away. They will help you out in a pinch.

One works for the State Employment Office. He gets me out (to work) every time he can.

They lead a respectable life, even if they are on the street. They just take a social drink.

We talk about business. My friends work. We advise each other and help each other.

They believe in working. We borrow money from each other. You can't do this with other people.

They talk sense. Well, they act their age. They're normal.

They don't drink. They don't mess around. We go to the show or we sit here and watch television or maybe have a card game.

Well, they're cleaner, are willing to work, are more sensible to talk to. Maybe the rest would be too, if they sobered up.

Yes, they are different; they don't drink so much.

My friends will work. There are many men here who would not even look for work. My friends at least have a little common decency left, morally speaking.

Older type. More different than younger type. Middle age men don't monkey in other people's business, takes care of his own. Easy to get along with.

## SUMMARY

Together, these data present a picture of the Skid Row social world that is far different from that suspected by many. Here we have a neighborhood where less than one-third of the inhabitants say they like their neighbors, and where only 16 percent have more than just a few close friends (with 39 percent having no friends at all). When asked why this situation exists, they express strong aversion for the kinds of people who live on Skid Row, and state bluntly either that they don't want to associate with these men or else that they aren't the kind of people you can make friends with. When friendships are formed, the friends are thought of as being "different" from (in the sense of being better than) the other residents, rather than as being average citizens of the area. If asked what is disliked about these men, they are criticized in terms that one would expect a critical outsider to use — their drunkenness, their begging, their jackrolling, their noise and rowdiness, their laziness, and their lack of cleanliness. Moreover, this entire complex occurs in a situation in which the individual man dislikes living here, even though he may not dislike his particular hotel or rooming house. Under these circumstances, one can only conclude that any conception of Skid Row as a tightly-knit, well-integrated and organized community where most of the residents interact freely and have a common "subculture" and tradition is a complete myth. Instead, Skid Row seems to be composed largely of discontented individuals who live in semi-isolation, who have few if any close friends, and who survive

by being suspicious of everybody. Almost one half of them dislike their housing, and criticize it by making use of standards that reveal they "want to live like other people." The exception to this picture is a smaller group of persons (the minority) who have many friends here, who like living on Skid Row, and whose friends are not "different" from other men on the street.

Moreover, it is very evident that Skid Row is divided over the issue of heavy drinking. The 60 percent of the men who are nondrinkers, light drinkers, or moderate drinkers dislike living among the 40 percent of men who are heavy drinkers or periodic drinkers, and with the jackrollers and other concomitants of the drinking complex. There is much evidence that this dislike is very intense, for it is expressed in one or more categories of each of the statistical tables that records "things disliked." For example, in Table 5-3, 39 percent of the men reported they disliked living on Skid Row because of the drunkenness and heavy drinking. In Table 5-6, 17 percent of the men said they disliked living in their particular hotel because there was too much drinking and rowdiness there. In Table 5-9, 63 percent of the respondents said they disliked the heavy drinking among the men who live on Skid Row. This dislike by persons who are not chronic alcoholics for those who are probably is as intense as any racial or ethnic prejudice in the city. The data presented above imply that roughly one-half of Skid Row's residents are forced by simple poverty — due to inflation, disability, small pensions, etc. — to live among a group of people it dislikes, fears and avoids. They dislike living in a type of housing (cubicles) that gives no insulation from the sights, sounds, and smells of chronic alcoholism — either during the daytime or at night. They resent the low social status that their Skid Row address gives them because of its connotations of alcoholism. Paradoxically, this dislike often is expressed by men who themselves are heavy drinkers. The chronic alcoholic dislikes the Skid Row life and the by-products of mass alcoholism almost as vehemently as the teetotalers and light drinkers.

Thus, in Chicago there seem to be two types of Skid Rows, whose populations are intermingled: (a) The Skid Row of the unattached man with low income who drinks moderately if at all, and (b) the Skid Row of the chronic alcoholic, the jackroller, the lazy beggar, and the derelict in an advanced stage of mental or physical deterioration. The first of these Skid Rows seems to be composed of persons who came here in response to economic pressure. The second of these Skid Rows seems to be composed of more or less "abnormal" persons who are here in response to economic pressure but also because they are psychologically disturbed or because they are deviant in comparison with society at large. In each group, all but a small fraction reject Skid Row life.

## FOOTNOTES

[1]The scores for individual hotels do not necessarily measure objectively the quality of living conditions in that place, for three reasons. First, the sample was so small that the score for individual hotels has a large sampling error. Second, the kinds of men living in a place varied greatly from hotel to hotel. For example, a group of alcoholic derelicts living in a very dilapidated place may give it a high rating of "like" because the management is permissive of drinking, while a well-operated and very clean hotel that excludes drinkers entirely may get a low rating because it is occupied by workingmen who have ambitions to get off Skid Row and live better, and hence are dissatisfied with their present situation. Finally, liking for a place is not necessarily identical with good housing conditions; it is shown in the summaries above that the reasons given for liking a hotel do not all pertain to the physical condition of the place. Despite these limitations, the scores are valuable for showing the existence of diversity.

*Chapter 6*

## *THE WORKINGMAN ON SKID ROW*

Of the residents of Skid Row who fell in the sample of this study, only 4 out of each 10 worked at any job during the week preceding the interview. Other chapters of this report deal primarily with the 6 of each 10 men who were not working, but this chapter focuses upon the homeless men who were wage earners. Work status was determined on two bases: (1) those who had worked during the week preceding the interview, and (2) those who had worked at some time during the preceding year. Statistics collected on each of these bases are discussed in the following pages.

Work Status and Drinking Classification. — As was described briefly in Chapter 3, it is neither the teetotalers nor the light drinkers who are most likely to be employed. Instead, it is the moderate drinkers. (Teetotalers and light drinkers are often old or disabled men who are retired or cannot work, and a high percentage of alcoholic derelicts are incapable of working or else are not inclined to work.) But less than one-half of the men in any drinking classification had worked during the week preceding the interview. Drinking is only one of several possible factors that make men on Skid Row unable or indisposed to work.

Nevertheless, if a man does work, there are very definite interrelationships between his drinking classification, and the amount of work he gets and the types of jobs he holds. Unemployment rates are much higher among those who drink freely or excessively than among those who do not. And an extraordinarily high percentage (30 percent) of alcoholic derelicts frankly stated that they had not cared to work during the preceding week. Working men who are light drinkers or moderate drinkers are much more inclined to hold steady jobs than those who are heavy drinkers or alcoholic derelicts. If they are employed at all, heavy drinkers and derelicts are more likely to be employed on a day-to-day basis as spot job workers.

Disability and Drinking in Relation to Work Status. — Among Skid Row men, old age and physical disability are much stronger deterrents to working than is drinking. Table 6-1 shows that only a small percentage of men 65 and over, and men severely or moderately handicapped, are reported as employed — irrespective of their drinking status. Never-

Table 6-1. EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF HOMELESS MEN ACCORDING TO DRINKING-DISABILITY-AGE CLASSIFICATION: CHICAGO SKID ROW, 1957

| Drinking-disability-age classification | Total | Total empl. | Employment status | | | | | | Ratio steady to total employed |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | Employed | | Unemployed | Did not care to work | Temporarily ill | Not in labor force | |
| | | | Steady job | Spot job | | | | | |
| TOTAL | 100.0 | 39.8 | 21.9 | 17.9 | 23.4 | 9.0 | 6.1 | 21.7 | 55.0 |
| A. SEVERELY AND MODERATELY HANDICAPPED | 100.0 | 21.7 | 9.3 | 12.4 | 15.6 | 10.0 | 10.8 | 41.9 | 42.9 |
| 1. Elderly--65 years of age and older | 100.0 | 11.3 | 5.0 | 6.3 | 1.3 | 7.5 | 3.3 | 76.7 | 44.2 |
| Teetotalers and light drinkers | 100.0 | 7.2 | 3.6 | 3.6 | ... | 5.4 | 3.0 | 84.3 | 50.0 |
| Moderate and heavy drinkers | 100.0 | 20.3 | 8.1 | 12.2 | 4.1 | 12.2 | 4.1 | 59.5 | 39.9 |
| 2. Young and middle aged--20-64 years | 100.0 | 26.2 | 11.1 | 15.1 | 21.7 | 11.1 | 14.0 | 26.9 | 42.4 |
| Teetotaler and light drinkers | 100.0 | 22.2 | 9.7 | 12.5 | 21.3 | 6.9 | 15.3 | 34.3 | 43.7 |
| Moderate drinkers | 100.0 | 33.6 | 21.6 | 12.1 | 17.2 | 2.6 | 18.1 | 28.4 | 64.3 |
| Heavy drinkers and derelicts | 100.0 | 26.2 | 7.1 | 19.1 | 24.4 | 19.6 | 10.7 | 19.1 | 27.1 |
| 20-44 years | 100.0 | 43.8 | 12.3 | 31.5 | 30.1 | 15.1 | 11.0 | ... | 28.1 |
| 45-64 years | 100.0 | 17.8 | 4.6 | 13.2 | 21.7 | 21.7 | 10.5 | 28.3 | 25.8 |
| B. SLIGHTLY AND NOT HANDICAPPED | 100.0 | 55.5 | 32.8 | 22.7 | 30.1 | 8.2 | 2.0 | 4.2 | 59.1 |
| 1. Elderly--65 years of age and older | 100.0 | 30.0 | 20.0 | 10.0 | 25.0 | 25.0 | ... | 20.0 | 66.7 |
| Teetotaler and light drinkers | 100.0 | 15.4 | 15.4 | ... | 30.8 | 30.8 | ... | 23.1 | 100.0 |
| Moderate and heavy drinkers | 100.0 | 57.1 | 28.6 | 28.6 | 14.3 | 14.3 | ... | 14.3 | 50.1 |
| 2. Young and middle aged--20-64 years | 100.0 | 57.3 | 33.6 | 23.6 | 30.5 | 7.0 | 2.1 | 3.1 | 58.6 |
| Teetotaler and light drinkers | 100.0 | 64.1 | 39.4 | 24.7 | 23.8 | 6.6 | 1.9 | 3.8 | 61.5 |
| Moderate drinkers | 100.0 | 53.9 | 35.5 | 18.4 | 35.1 | 4.4 | 2.6 | 3.9 | 65.9 |
| Heavy drinkers and derelicts | 100.0 | 52.7 | 26.4 | 26.4 | 34.1 | 9.3 | 1.9 | 1.9 | 50.1 |
| 20-44 years | 100.0 | 52.0 | 22.3 | 29.6 | 33.0 | 13.4 | 1.7 | ... | 42.9 |
| 45-64 years | 100.0 | 53.8 | 31.8 | 22.0 | 35.6 | 3.8 | 2.3 | 4.5 | 59.1 |

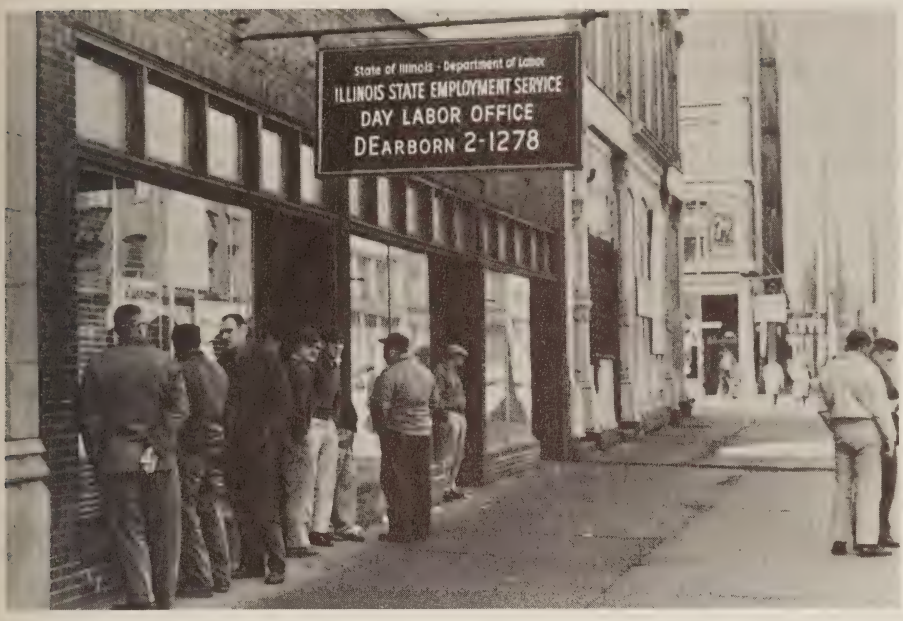
theless, moderate or heavy drinking has an independent additional effect which tends to reduce the proportion of younger unhandicapped men who are employed. The group of men who are most active in the labor force are those who are younger, less handicapped, and less heavy drinkers; 64 percent of this group had worked in the week preceding the interview. Among men of working age who are not handicapped, it is the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts who are unemployed most.

It is difficult to evaluate the validity of the responses concerning unemployment according to drinking status: a heavy drinker may have reported himself as merely unemployed when actually he may have been on a drinking spree. This would not apply to light drinkers, however, and rates of unemployment were very high even among able-bodied young men who were only light drinkers (24 percent of such men were unemployed).

Lack of job opportunity explains why large numbers of men had not worked during the week preceding the interview. As mentioned in the previous chapter, there is a very great seasonal fluctuation in Skid Row employment. The fluctuation in the demand for common labor in industries that make use of Skid Row workers seems to be extraordinarily high. Even though a resident of Skid Row may be most eager to work, does not drink, and is physically qualified, he may be involuntarily unemployed simply because there are not enough jobs to go around. At the depths of the winter slowdown in hiring, he may not be able to work even a part of each week.

Almost all of the men on Skid Row under 65 years of age, even the heavy drinkers, are potential workers: 86 percent of them had worked at some job sometime during the year preceding the interview. There was almost no variation in this by drinking classification — even 88 percent of the alcoholic derelicts had worked at some time during the preceding year. The fact that at the time of the interview only about one-half of the men were at work is explained by four factors: physical disability; chronic unemployment, with its seasonal fluctuations; age; and drinking status. A majority of Skid Row men who are not at work are either elderly, disabled, or involuntarily unemployed; drinking status ranks below the others.

It must be recognized, however, that the high unemployment rates among these men reflect in part the comparatively poor showing some of them make when they are employed. Because employers have had experience with the high percentage of Skid Row men who have poor health and poor work records, or who are heavy drinkers, they tend to attribute these qualities to all men from Skid Row addresses who apply for work. Homeless men who are willing to work, who do not drink, and who are not disabled, may still have high unemployment rates be-




THE STATE OF ILLINOIS MAINTAINS A CASUAL LABOR OFFICE ON SKID ROW

THROUGH AN EMPLOYMENT OFFICE MAINTAINED AT ITS READING ROOM THE CITY OF CHICAGO HELPS HUNDREDS OF MEN FIND WORK

cause of this attitude on the part of the employers.

Usual Occupation during Year Preceding Interview. — In the preceding chapters, the information about occupation has referred to the occupation of the man at the time of the interview. Each man was also asked a series of questions about his work during the 12 months immediately preceding the interview. On the basis of the types of jobs at which he had worked most, a "usual occupation" was recorded for him. In most cases, this was the job the man had held longest during the year. Table 6-2 presents this information on usual occupation, cross-tabulated by the drinking-disability-age classification. The differences in distribution between the present occupation and the usual occupation are not great, as may be determined from the following summary:

| Occupational type | Usual occupation during past year | Present occupation | All jobs held last year |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total . . . | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| White-collar workers, all kinds . . | 9.2 | 14.1 | 13.0 |
| Craftsmen, total . . . . . | 7.2 | 7.0 | 9.5 |
| Operatives, total . . . . . | 13.7 | 11.1 | 20.0 |
| manufacturing . . . . . | 7.2 | 1.9 | ... |
| non-manufacturing . . . . . | 6.5 | 9.2 | ... |
| Services, total . . . . . | 33.6 | 37.4 | 45.7 |
| Restaurant cooks and waiters . . | 6.3 | 5.1 | ... |
| Restaurant dishwashers, cleanup | 12.4 | 12.0 | ... |
| Other services . . . . . | 14.9 | 20.3 | ... |
| Laborers, farm . . . . . | ... | ... | 3.6 |
| Laborers, unskilled . . . . . | 30.6 | 29.4 | 45.4 |
| No information . . . . . | 5.7 | 1.0 | 3.7 |

Heavy drinkers and alcoholics are more often employed as unskilled laborers or as low-skill service workers and dishwashers, whereas teetotalers and light drinkers are a little more concentrated in white-collar jobs. Jobs as operatives in factories go to non-drinkers more often than to heavy drinkers.

Usual Industry of Employment. — The usual industry in which each man is employed was determined by a procedure similar to that followed for obtaining usual occupation. A comparison between year-round average (usual industry) and wintertime employment (present industry during week preceding the interview) may be made as follows:

| Industry | Usual industry in past year | Industry in preceding week |
|---|---|---|
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Agriculture | 3.2 | 1.3 |
| Construction | 5.7 | 2.9 |
| Manufacturing | 15.7 | 11.5 |
| Transportation, railroad | 16.4 | 10.6 |
| Transportation, other | 3.6 | |
| Wholesale and retail, except restaurant | 6.8 | 15.5 |
| Restaurants — eating and drinking places | 20.4 | 20.3 |
| Business services | 4.4 | 10.5 |
| Personal services | 6.5 | 19.4 |
| Entertainment | 5.9 | |
| Religious, welfare | 5.0 | 8.0 |
| Industry not reported | 6.4 | ... |

Table 6-2. USUAL OCCUPATION DURING PAST YEAR OF MEN WHO WORKED DURING THE YEAR: CHICAGO SKID ROW, 1957

| Usual occupation during past year | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | | Alcoholic derelicts |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers | |
| Total, who worked | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| White collar, total | 9.2 | 9.4 | 6.6 | 9.1 | 7.8 | 8.7 |
| Craftsmen, manufacturing | 2.9 | 3.3 | 3.5 | 2.0 | 2.3 | 2.2 |
| Craftsmen, non mfg. | 4.3 | 4.4 | 3.5 | 4.1 | 6.9 | 6.5 |
| Operatives, in mfg. | 7.2 | 8.3 | 6.6 | 5.1 | 4.6 | ... |
| Operatives, in nonmfg. | 6.5 | 6.5 | 7.5 | 6.4 | 7.6 | 5.8 |
| Restaurant--cooks, waiters, counter | 6.3 | 7.3 | 8.3 | 4.1 | 4.6 | 10.1 |
| Restaurant--dishwashers, etc. | 12.4 | 11.9 | 8.8 | 13.5 | 15.3 | 9.4 |
| Service workers, other | 14.9 | 14.3 | 12.3 | 6.2 | 20.6 | 10.1 |
| Laborers (by industry), Total | 30.6 | 34.8 | 43.0 | 39.6 | 30.5 | 47.1 |
| Construction and agric. | 4.8 | 6.0 | 7.9 | 2.4 | 1.5 | ... |
| Factory and mining | 3.3 | 3.1 | 2.2 | 3.7 | 2.3 | 2.2 |
| Transportation | 16.7 | 15.8 | 23.7 | 18.6 | 22.1 | 36.2 |
| Wholesale and retail | 4.1 | 4.2 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 1.5 | 3.6 |
| Other | 1.7 | 5.7 | 5.3 | 11.2 | 3.1 | 17.2 |
| No information | 5.7 | 3.9 | 1.8 | 9.5 | 3.1 | 2.9 |
| Did not work in past year | 13.5 | 4.2 | ... | 28.0 | 19.1 | 12.1 |

During the warm-weather months, employed Skid Row laborers work in agriculture, construction, and manufacturing to a much greater extent than during the winter months. The seasonal shifts related to railroad work are by far the greatest; the railroad is the major industry for one-sixth of the employed men on Skid Row, but they are hired for this work only during the summer and seek other work for the winter months in a variety of service industries and in missions.

From Table 6-3 the very striking relationship may be noted between the group of heavy drinkers and the group of railroad workers. More than 25 percent of all heavy drinkers and 38 percent of all alcoholic derelicts, among the Skid Row men who were employed during the year preceding the interview, gave railroad work as their usual industry. By contrast, only 12 percent of the teetotalers and light drinkers fell in this category. Two interpretations may be placed on this finding:

1. The railroad is a major benefactor of chronic alcoholics. It employs them when no one else will and thereby permits many to be self-supporting. It takes them off Skid Row for prolonged periods of time, dries them out, and gives them the balanced diet and exercise which temporarily break the cycle of incessant drinking.

Table 6-3. USUAL INDUSTRY OF EMPLOYMENT DURING PAST YEAR OF MEN WHO WORKED DURING THE YEAR: CHICAGO SKID ROW, 1957

| Usual industry in past year | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | | Alcoholic derelicts |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers | |
| Total..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Agriculture..... | 3.2 | 3.4 | 5.7 | 2.7 | 1.5 | ... |
| Construction..... | 5.7 | 7.2 | 4.8 | 2.7 | 4.6 | 4.3 |
| Manufacturing, mining... | 15.7 | 16.7 | 13.2 | 13.5 | 10.7 | 5.8 |
| Transportation, except railroad..... | 3.6 | 3.4 | 2.6 | 4.1 | 7.6 | 2.2 |
| Transportation, railroad | 16.4 | 15.4 | 26.3 | 18.2 | 20.6 | 38.4 |
| Wholesale and retail, except eating and drinking places..... | 6.8 | 7.3 | 4.8 | 5.7 | 1.5 | 2.9 |
| Wholesale and retail, eating and drinking places..... | 20.4 | 21.8 | 21.1 | 17.6 | 22.1 | 21.7 |
| Business service..... | 4.4 | 3.9 | 1.3 | 5.4 | 3.8 | 2.2 |
| Personal service..... | 6.5 | 5.0 | 3.5 | 9.5 | 8.4 | 3.6 |
| Entertainment..... | 5.9 | 6.8 | 5.7 | 4.1 | 4.6 | 2.2 |
| Religion, welfare, public administration.... | 5.0 | 4.6 | 9.2 | 6.1 | 9.2 | 11.6 |
| Industry not reported... | 6.4 | 4.4 | 1.8 | 10.5 | 5.3 | 5.1 |

THE LABOR CONTRACTOR'S OFFICE IS HOME BASE FOR SPOT JOB WORKERS

SCAVENGING IS A MAJOR SOURCE OF EMPLOYMENT

A SCAVENGER WITH LOADED BUGGY HEADS FOR THE "MARKET"

2. The railroad maintenance gang has a drinking culture which thrives as a substitute to the normal family life which is made impossible by the living arrangements and the conditions of work.

By the first view, the railroad serves a laudable welfare service. By the second view, the maintenance gang perpetuates a social institution that was characteristic of frontier America in mining, logging, cattle herding, and many other occupations; all these groups of males who worked in prolonged isolation from average community contacts developed and maintained a tradition of heavy drinking.

Types of Jobs Held during Year Preceding Interview. — During the course of a year, the Skid Row men hold a great variety of jobs. Table 6-4 shows all of the steady jobs (not spot jobs) classified by major type, and the percentages of men holding each type of job. This table shows that a considerable share of men have contact with better jobs which they do not or cannot keep. For example, almost 10 percent had jobs as craftsmen, 10 percent as clerical workers, and 20 percent as operatives. These are larger proportions than were reported for usual occupation (see the summary comparison of present and usual occupation in the above section on occupation during the past year). Some of

Table 6-4. TYPES OF JOBS HELD LAST YEAR BY MEN WHO HAD WORKED DURING THE YEAR: CHICAGO SKID ROW, 1957

| Occupational classification of all jobs held | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | | Alcoholic dereliicts |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers | |
| Total*..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| White collar | | | | | | |
| Professional, tech'l.. | 0.3 | ... | ... | 1.0 | 2.3 | 2.2 |
| Farmers, farm mgrs.... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Managers, officials, proprietors..... | 1.6 | 1.5 | 1.3 | 2.0 | ... | ... |
| Clerical and kindred workers..... | 9.7 | 10.6 | 8.8 | 7.8 | 5.3 | 6.5 |
| Sales workers..... | 1.4 | 2.1 | 1.8 | ... | ... | ... |
| Craftsmen, foremen, kindred workers..... | 9.5 | 10.6 | 9.6 | 7.4 | 10.7 | 10.9 |
| Operatives and kindred workers..... | 20.0 | 21.8 | 24.1 | 16.2 | 16.0 | 13.0 |
| Service workers..... | 45.7 | 45.0 | 43.0 | 47.0 | 50.4 | 40.6 |
| Farm laborers..... | 3.6 | 3.6 | 5.3 | 3.7 | 1.5 | ... |
| Laborers, except farm... | 45.4 | 47.2 | 59.6 | 41.9 | 38.9 | 59.4 |
| Occupation not reported. | 3.7 | 2.4 | ... | 6.4 | 3.1 | 1.4 |

*Percentages add to more than 100 percent because many of the men held more than one job.

THE SCAVENGERS LINE UP TO GET THEIR JUNK EVALUATED

THE BUYER HAS A LOW SCALE OF PRICES

the better jobs listed may have been held by men who "slid down" to Skid Row at sometime during the year preceding the interview.

On the other hand, almost all of the men had contact with lower-paying jobs during the year. Nearly one-half of them had worked as laborers and one-half as service workers. Thus, many who might earn high wages as gandies during the summer may be reduced to washing dishes or scavenging for bottles during the winter. An unusually high percentage of heavy drinkers, especially those aged 20-44 years, had worked as laborers.

It may be noted with some interest that Chicago's Skid Row is not a winter stopping-over place for large numbers of agricultural workers, for only 4 percent of the men interviewed reported that they had been farm laborers at any time during the preceding year.

Hours Worked by Drinking-Disability-Age Classification. — It has been shown in an earlier chapter that only about one-half of Skid Row workingmen are employed at full-time jobs. Table 6-5 shows that part-time work is especially common among men who are disabled and who are heavy drinkers: 35 percent of the non-handicapped men aged 45-64 who are heavy drinkers worked less than 15 hours during the week preceding the interview. (Many of these are gandy dancers who work only during the summer.) Only 14 percent of the non-handicapped teetotalers

Table 6-5. HOURS WORKED AND WAGES PER HOUR FOR WEEK PRECEDING INTERVIEW BY EMPLOYED MEN UNDER 65 YEARS OF AGE: CHICAGO SKID ROW, 1957

| Hours worked and wages per hour | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | | Alcoholic dereliicts |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers | |
| HOURS WORKED | | | | | | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 1-14 hours | 22.8 | 21.5 | 29.3 | 26.8 | 42.4 | 35.7 |
| 15-34 hours | 24.3 | 24.6 | 18.9 | 23.5 | 15.3 | 16.1 |
| 35-40 hours | 29.3 | 28.0 | 25.0 | 33.6 | 20.3 | 14.3 |
| 41-47 hours | 8.0 | 10.0 | 6.1 | 1.3 | ... | 8.9 |
| 48 hours or more | 15.6 | 15.9 | 20.7 | 14.8 | 22.0 | 25.0 |
| WAGES PER HOUR | | | | | | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Less than $.35 | 4.2 | 3.0 | 3.7 | 8.1 | 8.5 | ... |
| $.40 to $.65 | 13.4 | 12.2 | 14.0 | 17.4 | 15.3 | 17.9 |
| $.70 to $.95 | 18.3 | 16.5 | 20.1 | 24.2 | 28.8 | 25.0 |
| $1.00 | 22.6 | 25.0 | 22.6 | 14.8 | 13.6 | 19.6 |
| $1.05 to $1.30 | 11.5 | 13.8 | 14.6 | 4.0 | 5.1 | 10.7 |
| $1.35 to $1.70 | 8.9 | 8.5 | 11.0 | 10.1 | 10.2 | 5.4 |
| $1.75 to $2.20 | 13.7 | 13.0 | 8.5 | 16.1 | 10.2 | 10.7 |
| $2.25 and over | 5.6 | 6.7 | 5.5 | 2.0 | 5.1 | 10.7 |
| Wages not reported | 1.7 | 1.2 | ... | 3.4 | 3.4 | ... |

or light drinkers worked so few hours.

The men who worked the most hours during the week preceding the interview were also the heavy drinkers. Among unskilled workers and workers in service occupations (such as restaurant dishwashing) where long hours are required, heavy drinking is a leading pastime. This finding can be stated in another way: many industries that consent to hire men with a drinking problem make them work long hours, often at very low pay.

Wages and Drinking-Disability-Age Classification. — Who on Skid Row receives the extraordinarily low wages reported in Chapter 3, and who receives the more adequate rates of pay? Table 6-5 shows that, in comparison with other workingmen, a higher percentage of physically disabled men or heavy drinkers receives lower wages. However, low rates of pay are not confined to these two disadvantaged groups. Even among workers who are not handicapped and who are teetotalers or only light drinkers, 12.2 percent received 65 cents an hour or less, and 27 percent received less than the minimum wage of $1.00 per hour. The disabled workingman who does not drink is especially subject to low pay: 45 percent received less than $1.00 per hour. Of the men who were earning $1.75 per hour or more, a disproportionately large share were teetotalers or only light drinkers. Yet, as Table 6-5 reports, many handicapped men and many men who are heavy drinkers do receive wages of $1.75 per hour or more. In fact, among the 26 percent of alcoholic derelicts who had worked during the week preceding the interview, one-fifth (roughly 5 percent of all derelicts) claimed wages that high.

Table 6-6. TOTAL WAGES EARNED DURING WEEK PRECEDING INTERVIEW BY EMPLOYED MEN UNDER 65 YEARS OF AGE: CHICAGO SKID ROW, 1957

| Percent distribution by wages earned last week | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | | Alcoholic derelicts |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| $0-9 | 16.7 | 15.9 | 18.9 | 19.5 | 23.7 | 21.4 |
| $10-19 | 17.3 | 15.0 | 15.2 | 24.8 | 30.5 | 19.6 |
| $20-29 | 15.6 | 16.1 | 15.9 | 14.1 | 15.3 | 8.9 |
| $30-39 | 9.5 | 9.6 | 3.7 | 9.4 | 10.2 | 5.4 |
| $40-49 | 13.4 | 14.4 | 15.2 | 10.1 | 10.2 | 14.3 |
| $50-69 | 14.2 | 14.2 | 20.7 | 14.1 | 5.1 | 25.0 |
| $70 and over | 11.9 | 13.6 | 10.4 | 6.0 | 5.1 | 5.4 |
| Not reported | 1.4 | 1.2 | ... | 2.0 | ... | ... |

Wages Earned by Workingmen during Week Preceding the Interview by Drinking-Disability-Age Classification. — Forty percent of the workingmen on Skid Row earn less than $25.00 per week, an amount which may be regarded as the minimum adequate for a man to support himself. As is implied in the preceding section on earnings, it is the disabled man and the heavy drinker who have the smallest earnings and the man both handicapped and alcoholic who reports the lowest rate of earning: more than 60 percent of the heavy drinkers who worked and who were moderately or severely handicapped earned less than $25.00 during the week preceding the interview. But even one-third of the non-handicapped workers who were teetotalers or light drinkers earned less than the minimum needed for adequate self-maintenance. It is clear that poverty due to inadequate earning power is very widespread on Skid Row, even among the workingmen who are not disabled and who are not heavy drinkers.

Table 6-7. INCOME LAST YEAR OF HOMELESS MEN, BY DRINKING-DISABILITY-AGE CLASSIFICATION: CHICAGO SKID ROW, 1957

| Percent distribution by income earned last year | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | | Alcoholic derelicts |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers | |
| Total..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Less than $750..... | 16.4 | 11.6 | 10.0 | 24.1 | 24.0 | 19.6 |
| $750 to $1500..... | 29.4 | 24.0 | 17.9 | 37.9 | 37.2 | 29.3 |
| $1500 to $2500..... | 24.0 | 27.6 | 36.9 | 18.3 | 14.3 | 20.7 |
| $2500 and over..... | 25.7 | 33.2 | 34.2 | 14.0 | 19.4 | 27.7 |
| Income not reported..... | 4.4 | 3.6 | 1.2 | 5.7 | 5.1 | 2.7 |

Income Earned Last Year by Workingmen, by Drinking-Disability-Age Classification. — The picture painted above, on the basis of weekly income during the winter season, is also generally valid on an annual basis. Continuing on the supposition that $25.00 per week ($1,300 per year) is the minimum income consistent with decent and healthful living for a familyless man, then about 40 percent of the workingmen on Skid Row fail to earn enough during the course of a year to support themselves at this minimum level, and about one-seventh of them do not even achieve one-half of this minimum. This inadequacy of income is greatest among the handicapped and among the heavy drinkers. Even the workingman who is not handicapped and is a teetotaler or light drinker earns a minimum adequate livelihood in only 70 percent of the

AN EXHAUSTED SCAVENGER NAPS IN HIS CART AFTER SELLING HIS LOAD

THE JUNK YARDS CONTRIBUTE TO THE UNSIGHTLINESS OF SKID ROW

cases. From the preceding discussion, it is evident that the able-bodied non-alcoholics who earn inadequate incomes are subject to large amounts of involuntary unemployment, although a minority of them may have inadequate earnings because of indolence (see Table 6-7).

Sources of Income of All Skid Row Men by Drinking-Disability-Age Classification. — The preceding discussion of the income of workingmen on Skid Row provides a convenient opportunity to digress long enough to report the sources of income of all Skid Row men, by their drinking-disability-age classification (Table 6-8). Only about one-half of all men who live on Skid Row support themselves entirely from wages or salary; the other one-half live either entirely on pensions of some type (10 percent) or else on some combination of wages and pension. Of the 40 percent who combine wages and pensions to earn a livelihood, by far the greatest proportion shuttle between unemployment insurance

Table 6-8. SOURCES OF INCOME: PERCENT OF MEN WHO RECEIVED SPECIFIED PROPORTIONS OF THEIR INCOME FROM WAGES, PENSIONS, AND GIFTS: CHICAGO SKID ROW, 1957

| Percent income and source | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | | Alcoholic dereliicts |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers | |
| Total..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| DERIVED FROM WAGES | | | | | | |
| Zero..... | 11.4 | 3.0 | 0.8 | 24.5 | 17.7 | 11.7 |
| 1-19..... | 4.3 | 2.8 | 1.2 | 6.9 | 6.3 | 5.9 |
| 20-59..... | 4.1 | 2.8 | 4.8 | 6.4 | 5.1 | 2.7 |
| 60-79..... | 6.8 | 6.4 | 10.0 | 7.6 | 11.4 | 13.9 |
| 80-99..... | 18.4 | 19.5 | 24.6 | 16.7 | 20.0 | 25.5 |
| 100 percent..... | 52.6 | 64.0 | 58.7 | 34.8 | 37.1 | 39.4 |
| DERIVED FROM PENSIONS | | | | | | |
| Zero..... | 61.5 | 72.1 | 72.2 | 44.8 | 45.1 | 51.1 |
| 1-19..... | 11.3 | 12.6 | 15.9 | 9.3 | 13.7 | 16.5 |
| 20-79..... | 9.7 | 8.1 | 10.8 | 12.5 | 14.3 | 14.9 |
| 80-99..... | 5.2 | 3.0 | 1.2 | 9.3 | 8.5 | 6.4 |
| 100 percent..... | 9.8 | 2.7 | ... | 21.0 | 16.0 | 10.1 |
| DERIVED FROM GIFTS | | | | | | |
| Zero percent..... | 85.5 | 87.9 | 83.3 | 81.7 | 83.4 | 81.4 |
| Less than 10 percent.. | 6.5 | 6.0 | 6.7 | 7.1 | 6.3 | 4.8 |
| 10 percent and over... | 5.7 | 4.3 | 9.9 | 8.1 | 7.9 | 12.8 |
| NOT REPORTED..... | 2.3 | 1.8 | ... | 3.1 | 2.3 | 1.1 |

and employment, with employment furnishing one-half or more of the income in a majority of cases. Each year, about 15 percent of the men receive gifts of some sort from inheritance, from begging, or from other sources, but this provides as much as 10 percent of the total income for only about 6 percent of the men.

Men who are physically handicapped receive a much greater share of their livelihood from pensions and gifts, and less from wages than do men who are not handicapped. Also, men who are heavy drinkers (especially younger men) tend to rely more than others upon small pension payments (unemployment compensation) and upon gifts for a larger part of their income.

The alcoholic derelicts (extreme right column of Table 6-8) depend solely upon wages in only about 40 percent of the cases; 60 percent rely upon pensions or gifts at least in part; 10 percent obtain their full livelihood from pensions; and the other 50 percent rely upon a combination of gifts, pension, and wages. About 12 percent of them received no wages at all during the year preceding the interview.

This information concerning sources of income reported in Table 6-8 demonstrates, in yet another way, just how much the entire economy of Skid Row depends upon transfer payments of public funds for unemployment, public welfare, old-age, Social Security, or other pensions.

Number of Jobs Held in Year Preceding the Interview, by Drinking-Disability-Age Classification. — In making these calculations, a job was counted only if it was a potential regular job and not a spot job. Duration of job is not considered here, but will be discussed in the next section. The average Skid Row man who works holds 2 or more jobs during the course of a year. Only about 40 percent of the workingmen had held only one job, and 16 percent had not had a steady job at all, but only spot jobs. A higher proportion of men who were disabled and heavy drinkers had held 2 or more jobs than men who were not disabled or not heavy drinkers. Young men who were heavy drinkers had by far the greatest number of job changes: 12 percent of such men had 5 or more regular jobs during the preceding year.

Table 6-9. NUMBER OF JOBS HELD LAST YEAR BY MEN WHO WORKED: CHICAGO SKID ROW, 1957

| Number of jobs held last year | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | | Alcoholic derelicts |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 1 job | 38.5 | 41.5 | 36.8 | 32.4 | 34.4 | 39.9 |
| 2 jobs | 23.5 | 24.2 | 25.4 | 22.0 | 25.2 | 24.6 |
| 3 jobs | 10.4 | 10.7 | 10.5 | 9.8 | 13.0 | 8.0 |
| 4 jobs | 5.9 | 6.0 | 8.3 | 5.7 | 7.6 | 5.8 |
| 5 jobs or more | 3.1 | 4.1 | 9.6 | 1.0 | ... | 6.5 |
| No steady jobs, only spot jobs | 16.0 | 11.4 | 7.9 | 25.7 | 16.8 | 11.6 |
| No information | 2.5 | 2.1 | 1.3 | 3.4 | 3.1 | 3.6 |

Table 6-9 shows that heavy drinkers did not comprise the main category of men who worked only at spot jobs during the year preceding the interview. Rather, it was the handicapped men of all types and non-handicapped men who were moderate drinkers. Fully one-third of this group had worked only at spot jobs. Thus, the spot job worker is less likely to be a chronic alcoholic than to be a disabled person, except in winter when gandies turn to spot job work, too.

Weeks Worked Per Job, by Drinking-Disability-Age Classification. — How long can a Skid Row workman hold a regular job? Table 6-10 answers this question for each of several drinking-disability-age classifications. Only 13 percent of all men who worked during the year had held one job throughout that time. At the other extreme, about 30 percent either changed jobs every day or so (worked only at spot jobs) or else changed regular jobs every two months or oftener. An additional large share of men who worked (roughly one-third) changed regular jobs every 2 to 6 months, giving them a total of 2 to 6 job changes for the year. The ability to hold a job for a long period of time is closely related to not being handicapped and not being a heavy drinker. The men who had the most frequent job changes (worked the shortest time per job) were heavy drinkers (especially non-disabled, young men) and handicapped teetotalers and moderate drinkers.

Table 6-10. AVERAGE WEEKS PER JOB DURING YEAR PRECEDING INTERVIEW OF MEN WHO WORKED AT REGULAR FULL-TIME JOBS: CHICAGO SKID ROW, 1957

| Average weeks per job | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | | Alcoholic derelicts |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 0-3 weeks | 6.5 | 5.7 | 6.2 | 8.5 | 8.9 | 6.4 |
| 4-7 weeks | 9.9 | 9.4 | 16.3 | 11.2 | 9.8 | 12.8 |
| 8-11 weeks | 12.4 | 9.6 | 11.1 | 19.3 | 13.4 | 16.8 |
| 12-15 weeks | 11.7 | 14.0 | 13.9 | 6.3 | 7.1 | 8.8 |
| 16-19 weeks | 10.6 | 12.3 | 15.9 | 6.3 | 7.1 | 12.8 |
| 20-23 weeks | 7.3 | 7.2 | 9.6 | 7.6 | 9.8 | 10.4 |
| 24-27 weeks | 9.3 | 7.7 | 5.3 | 13.0 | 17.9 | 12.0 |
| 28-39 weeks | 5.5 | 5.5 | 1.0 | 5.8 | 9.0 | ... |
| 40-47 weeks | 5.9 | 7.8 | 5.8 | 1.3 | ... | 2.4 |
| 48 and over | 13.4 | 15.1 | 8.2 | 9.4 | 2.7 | ... |
| No information | 7.3 | 5.7 | 6.7 | 11.2 | 14.3 | 17.6 |
| Spot jobs only | 15.9 | 11.7 | 8.8 | 24.7 | 14.5 | 9.4 |
| Not worked | 13.5 | 4.2 | ... | 28.0 | 19.1 | 12.1 |

Like or Dislike for Jobs. — Each man who had worked in recent months was asked the questions, "How well do you like the work you have been doing recently; do you like or dislike it? What do you like

STEALING SMALL ITEMS AND SELLING THEM IS A SOURCE OF INCOME TO SOME OF THE MORE CUNNING

HERE IS THE WINDOW OF A "WE BUY ANYTHING" SHOP

about it? What do you dislike?" Roughly one-half (52 percent) of the men stated that they liked their work, about one-fourth openly stated that they disliked it, while the other one-fourth were ambivalent (see Table 6-11). The greatest degree of overt dissatisfaction came from men who were heavy drinkers. Among men who were teetotalers or light drinkers, the proportion dissatisfied was less than 40 percent as great as among heavy drinkers. This was true both for handicapped and non-handicapped workers.

Table 6-11. LIKE OR DISLIKE FOR RECENT WORK EXPRESSED BY SKID ROW MEN: CHICAGO, 1957

| Like or dislike for recent work, of those reporting | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Dislikes recent work | 24.0 | 24.7 | 34.2 | 22.4 | 31.7 |
| Neither likes nor dislikes | 12.9 | 11.3 | 8.5 | 16.6 | 18.7 |
| Does not dislike, but prefers another | 10.1 | 12.0 | 10.3 | 5.8 | 7.3 |
| Likes recent work | 51.6 | 50.5 | 44.4 | 54.1 | 42.3 |
| No information re: like or dislike | 1.4 | 1.5 | 2.6 | 1.2 | ... |
| No recent work or retired | 17.4 | 6.8 | 4.9 | 34.1 | 23.1 |
| No information on recent work | 2.4 | 2.3 | ... | 2.5 | 4.1 |

When asked what it was about their jobs that they liked most, the men who expressed an opinion gave the reasons summarized in Table 6-12. More than 40 percent of those who had worked did not mention liking any particular thing. Among the men who did mention something about their jobs that they liked, one-third stated that their jobs were suited to them or gave them satisfaction. Good or comfortable working conditions were mentioned by 15 percent. Although 10 percent reported that they liked the financial aspects (the rate of pay), this was heavily concentrated among the teetotaler or light drinker groups that held, as shown above, the steadier and better-paying jobs. Only 3 percent mentioned liking their employer, and only 5 percent felt that their jobs offered enough security to mention this as an asset.

When asked what they disliked (Table 6-13), the leading items mentioned were dislike of the nature of the work, low pay, insecurity, and poor working conditions. However, of the men who had worked recently, one-half failed to mention disliking any particular thing about their jobs. Only 1 percent reported a dislike for the employer. Heavy drinkers, especially those not handicapped, did not like the kind of

Table 6-12. THINGS LIKED ABOUT RECENT WORK: HOMELESS MEN ON CHICAGO SKID ROW, 1957

| Things liked about recent work (among men who have worked recently) | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers |
| Percent of men mentioning | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Financial (good pay) | 9.7 | 9.8 | 9.8 | 9.7 | 5.7 |
| Security | 5.2 | 6.5 | 8.1 | 2.3 | ... |
| Job suitability, satisfaction | 30.5 | 28.6 | 26.1 | 34.7 | 32.5 |
| Employer | 3.1 | 3.9 | 3.4 | 1.2 | ... |
| Fellow employees | 7.1 | 8.9 | 9.8 | 3.1 | 2.4 |
| Comfort, working conditions | 15.1 | 14.6 | 15.8 | 16.2 | 24.4 |
| Hours of work | 1.4 | 2.1 | 1.3 | ... | ... |
| Independence | 6.9 | 8.0 | 6.8 | 4.2 | 4.9 |
| Working, but no likes mentioned | 43.5 | 43.2 | 44.4 | 44.4 | 46.3 |

work they had been doing and believed that the pay was too low.

The information concerning job satisfaction might be summarized by stating that although there is a moderately high level of job dissatisfaction among homeless men, it is much lower than might be expected in view of the low wages, high unemployment, and other conditions described earlier in this chapter. Their aspirations for better work are quite modest.

Table 6-13. THINGS DISLIKED ABOUT RECENT WORK: HOMELESS MEN ON CHICAGO SKID ROW, 1957

| Things disliked about recent work among men who had worked recently | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers |
| Financial (low pay) | 16.7 | 19.2 | 21.4 | 11.2 | 8.1 |
| Lack of security | 10.3 | 11.3 | 14.1 | 8.1 | 4.9 |
| Job not suitable, dislike that kind of work | 18.7 | 18.5 | 23.1 | 19.3 | 26.8 |
| Dislike employer | 1.3 | 1.4 | 0.9 | 1.2 | ... |
| Dislike fellow employees | 2.6 | 3.4 | 2.6 | 0.8 | 1.6 |
| Uncomfortable, poor working conditions | 6.4 | 8.0 | 6.0 | 2.7 | 1.6 |
| Dislike hours of work | 3.7 | 3.8 | 5.6 | 3.5 | 7.3 |
| Lack of independence | 1.7 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 2.7 | ... |
| Working, no dislikes mentioned | 51.0 | 46.9 | 40.2 | 60.2 | 59.3 |

Spot Jobs Versus Steady Jobs. — The spot job plays such an important part in the lives of the Skid Row men that an effort was made to learn how well they liked this kind of employment. The question was asked, "Would you rather have spot jobs or a steady job?" Men who reported that they preferred spot jobs were asked why they made this choice. Men who preferred steady jobs were asked, "Do you think you could handle a steady job working five days a week, eight hours a day?" Those who wanted a steady job but thought they would not be able to handle it were asked what would keep them from being able to work full time. Table 6-14 summarizes the results of this line of inquiry. Despite the fact that spot jobs comprised more than 45 percent of the total employment during the week preceding the interview, only 7 percent of the men preferred working at spot jobs to having a steady job. Often it is said that heavy drinkers really would prefer to work at spot jobs because they have complete freedom to choose the days to work and the days to drink. Actually, heavy drinkers showed the same lack of enthusiasm for spot jobs that teetotalers and light drinkers did. In fact, as a group, the teetotalers showed the greatest preference for spot jobs because many of them felt too old or sick to try to hold a steady job.

Table 6-14. PREFERENCE OF SKID ROW MEN FOR SPOT JOBS OR STEADY JOBS, AND REASONS FOR PREFERENCE: CHICAGO SKID ROW, 1957

| Preference for spot or steady work of men under 65, and working over 65 | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers |
| Total..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Prefer spot job..... | 6.4 | 4.6 | 5.7 | 9.4 | 9.2 |
| Too old or sick..... | 1.8 | 1.4 | 1.2 | 2.4 | 1.8 |
| Do not need steady job. | 0.3 | ... | ... | 0.8 | ... |
| Confession of unsteadiness at holding job... | 2.2 | 2.2 | 3.3 | 2.1 | 1.8 |
| Problem of drinking.... | 1.2 | 0.5 | 1.2 | 2.4 | 5.5 |
| No reason given..... | 0.9 | 0.5 | ... | 1.6 | ... |
| Prefer steady job..... | 90.1 | 93.1 | 93.1 | 84.9 | 85.3 |
| Could handle steady job | 61.0 | 62.5 | 65.4 | 58.6 | 60.7 |
| Could not handle steady job, total..... | 6.2 | 0.9 | 2.4 | 15.1 | 15.9 |
| Too old or sick..... | 4.4 | ... | ... | 11.8 | 8.6 |
| Do not need steady job | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Confession of unsteadiness at holding job. | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Problem of drinking... | 1.8 | 0.9 | 2.4 | 3.2 | 7.4 |
| No information on whether could handle... | 22.9 | 29.7 | 25.2 | 11.3 | 8.6 |
| No information on preference..... | 3.6 | 2.4 | 1.2 | 5.6 | 5.5 |

Although there was overwhelming preference for steady work, a substantial share of the men stated they did not think they could handle a steady job. Many of the light drinkers and teetotalers reported they were too old or sick while many of the heavy drinkers admitted that problem drinking would prevent them from working steadily. About 10 percent of the heavy drinkers confessed either that they did not want a steady job or that they did not think they could hold a steady job if they had it.

However, 60 percent of the men who were available for work definitely preferred steady employment and said they thought they could hold such a job if it were offered to them.

Interest in Vocational Training. — The suggestion has been made that these men should be offered training that would equip them for better and more satisfying work than unskilled labor. The men were asked, "If you could get free training to prepare you for a better job, would you be interested in taking it?" Those who answered "No" were asked why, and those who answered "Yes" were asked what kind of training they would like. Table 6-15 reports the results of these inquiries.

Table 6-15. INTEREST IN OBTAINING FREE TRAINING FOR A BETTER JOB: SKID ROW IN CHICAGO, 1957

| Interest in training for men reporting | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Interested in free training | 74.8 | 79.3 | 78.9 | 67.5 | 67.5 |
| No interest in free training | 25.2 | 20.7 | 21.1 | 32.5 | 32.5 |
| Too old, sick, retired | 15.3 | 10.2 | 6.3 | 23.5 | 22.5 |
| Satisfied with present job | 9.1 | 10.2 | 12.7 | 7.4 | 8.1 |
| Don't think can learn now | 1.7 | 1.3 | 2.1 | 2.4 | 3.8 |
| No information re reason | 0.3 | ... | ... | 0.8 | ... |
| No information re interest | 6.0 | 5.1 | 3.7 | 7.4 | 5.3 |

Three-fourths of the men said they would be interested in free training, and one-fourth reported no interest. The reasons given most often for not being interested were age and sickness. This type of answer was especially frequent among the men who were physically handicapped. Most of the remainder of the no-interest group reported that they were satisfied with their present jobs. Only about 2 percent said they were not interested because they could not or would not want to learn.

As this was a hypothetical question, it cannot assure what action the men might take. However, these responses indicate a widespread desire for vocational training or retraining on Skid Row. Such a program should be considered in planning for the rehabilitation of these men.

When asked what kind of training they would like to get, almost one-half wanted to learn a craft. Also, a substantial share wanted to learn to be operatives in factories. The specific occupations which were mentioned most often as vocational training objectives are:

| | Percent of men |
|---|---|
| Machine-shop workers (punchpress, lathe, etc.) | 9.4 |
| Radio-TV repairmen | 6.8 |
| Electricians | 6.0 |
| Cooks, chefs, and bakers | 5.6 |
| Carpenters | 4.5 |
| Mechanics, auto and aircraft | 4.5 |
| Machinists | 4.5 |
| Mechanics, unspecified | 3.4 |
| Welders | 3.4 |
| Barbers and beauticians | 3.0 |
| Air-conditioning and refrigeration workers | 2.6 |
| Clerical workers | 2.6 |
| Diesel mechanics | 2.6 |
| Engineers (excluding electronics) | 2.6 |
| Engineers, electronic | 2.6 |
| Janitors and maintenance workers | 2.3 |
| Sales workers | 2.3 |
| Plumbers | 1.9 |
| Supervisors, foremen, inspectors | 1.9 |
| Technicians (medical, dental, X-ray) | 1.9 |
| Bricklayers | 1.5 |
| Hospital attendants (orderlies and porters) | 1.5 |
| Painters (construction and maintenance) | 1.5 |
| Porters and bus boys | 1.5 |
| Stationary engineers | 1.5 |

G. I. Training. — Since many of the men on Skid Row are veterans, they have already had a chance to get free vocational training of the type that has just been discussed. In order to find out to what extent they had made use of the G. I. Bill to obtain additional education after service, all veterans of World War II and the Korean War were asked, "Did you try to get training under the G. I. Bill? (If not, why

Table 6-16. KIND OF TRAINING WANTED BY MEN WHO WERE INTERESTED IN OBTAINING FREE TRAINING

| Kind of training desired by those interested | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Professional, technical and kindred workers | 12.3 | 10.5 | 10.2 | 15.7 | 21.3 |
| Farmers and farm mgrs. | 0.3 | 0.4 | 1.1 | ... | ... |
| Managers, officials, and prop. (except farm) | 1.2 | 1.2 | 1.6 | 1.2 | ... |
| Clerical and kindred workers | 3.7 | 3.7 | ... | 3.5 | 2.8 |
| Sales workers | 3.0 | 4.5 | 8.6 | ... | ... |
| Craftsmen, foremen, and kindred workers | 48.2 | 52.1 | 61.3 | 40.8 | 52.8 |
| Operatives and kindred workers | 16.2 | 15.3 | 18.2 | 18.0 | 6.5 |
| Service workers | 11.5 | 10.7 | 9.1 | 12.9 | 15.7 |
| Farm laborers and foremen | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Laborers except farm and mine | 0.4 | ... | ... | 1.2 | 2.8 |
| No information re kind of training desired | 16.2 | 13.6 | 8.6 | 21.2 | 14.8 |

not?)" Table 6-17 summarizes the results of this inquiry. Of all men on Skid Row, 38 percent were veterans and had been eligible for veterans' educational benefits. Of these, 10.8 percent of the men, or 28 percent of those who had been eligible, had taken such training. About the same percentage of heavy drinkers and light drinkers had taken additional training.

Those who had not taken advantage of their veterans' benefits gave two major reasons: they had not been interested in getting training then, and they had been too anxious to get to work earning money when they got out of service. Smaller proportions reported they had family obligations. About 5 percent confessed they were too restless to study, and an additional 6 percent said they knew they couldn't complete a program of training because of their heavy drinking at the time of discharge. Ten percent said they had not taken advantage of the opportunity because they doubted their ability. These self-doubters were teetotalers or light drinkers as frequently as they were heavy drinkers.

## SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The "mystery" of why so many men on Skid Row do not work is quite simple. Five major factors are involved:

1. These men work at occupations and for industries where involuntary unemployment is a chronic condition and where seasonal variations in unemployment are very high.
2. A high percentage of these men are physically disabled or handicapped. They are unable to hold steady jobs as laborers because of their health and disability status.
3. A high percentage of these men are past 40 years of age. Employers discriminate against older workers when hiring unskilled laborers. Rates of involuntary unemployment are very high, even among teetotalers and light drinkers, when the man has passed his 40th or 45th birthday.
4. Many of the men who are heavy drinkers or who are chronic alcoholics are irregular in their work habits and often do not care to work. They work only enough to "get by."
5. Some are ambitionless "bums" who try to get by with as little work as possible.

Table 6-17. ELIGIBILITY OF HOMELESS MEN FOR EDUCATIONAL BENEFITS UNDER THE G.I. BILL, USE OF THESE BENEFITS, AND REASONS FOR NOT USING

| Eligibility for G.I. Bill and reasons for not using | Total | Drinking-disability classification of men under 65 years of age | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Slight and no handicap | | Moderate and severe handicap | |
| | | Total | Heavy drinkers | Total | Heavy drinkers |
| TRAINING UNDER THE G.I. BILL - Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Eligible veteran, no training | 27.5 | 32.7 | 42.3 | 19.4 | 26.6 |
| Veteran, obtained training | 10.8 | 13.2 | 14.6 | 6.9 | 10.1 |
| Veteran, not eligible | 9.8 | 6.4 | 6.5 | 15.2 | 11.2 |
| Not a veteran | 45.1 | 41.4 | 30.5 | 51.0 | 42.6 |
| No information on training or eligibility | 6.8 | 6.4 | 6.1 | 7.6 | 9.5 |
| Percent of eligible veterans who took training | 28.2 | 28.8 | 25.7 | 26.2 | 27.5 |
| REASONS NO TRAINING OBTAINED BY VETERANS ELIGIBLE FOR G.I.BILL OF THOSE WHO ANSWERED | | | | | |
| Married or family obligations | 5.9 | 5.2 | 4.8 | 7.6 | 13.3 |
| Anxious to get to work, make money | 24.6 | 25.2 | 20.2 | 22.8 | 13.3 |
| Too restless to study | 5.2 | 5.7 | 6.7 | 3.8 | ... |
| Was drinking too heavily | 5.9 | 5.2 | 10.6 | 7.6 | 13.3 |
| Was not interested then | 38.1 | 38.6 | 48.1 | 36.7 | 44.4 |
| Was in jail, hospital | 0.7 | ... | ... | 2.5 | ... |
| Doubted own ability to benefit | 9.7 | 10.0 | 11.5 | 8.9 | 11.1 |

Quite often the fourth and fifth of these factors — drinking and laziness — are held to be the sole explanations for widespread unemployment on Skid Row. Evidence assembled in this chapter suggests that although drinking and shirking are involved, they seem to be involved prominently in less than one-half the cases of unemployment, and even then the three other important factors are simultaneously present.

In other words, Skid Row is a regional collecting place for physically disabled common laborers who are in poor health and who are having difficulty getting work even though they may not drink. Employment experts often talk of "unemployables" — persons who lack any skills or qualifications for which there is a demand in the labor market at the particular time. These unemployable men may be of low intelligence, may have developed a severe hernia, or may simply be past 45 years of age and hence too old for unskilled labor. Such men who have no family or other resources to fall back on are slowly forced to drift into this pool of unemployed. The chronic alcoholic is only a special case in a general process. The labor problem of Skid Row, therefore, is not simply one of alcoholism but is a matter of broad employment policy and a by-product of the functioning of the labor market. In recent decades, the nation has attempted to put a "floor" beneath the labor market in order to make it impossible for persons to be brutalized by the working of impersonal competitive processes. Minimum wage laws and unemployment compensation are intended to serve this function, but there are flaws and loopholes in this program. Among the Skid Row workingmen affected by these loopholes are those who do not work in an interstate industry, who have not established legal residence in any state, who do not work in industries covered by Social Security, or who work for unscrupulous employers who avoid the spirit of the law by declaring their employees (working at inhumanly low rates of pay) to be "self-employed independent operators." Some are unskilled men who simply cannot locate a job because of lack of intelligence, because of physical defects, or because of age. One of the ways to shrink Skid Row is to patch some of the leaks in the "floor" of social legislation that seeks to establish minimum employment conditions. Almost any American citizen, if denied work opportunities for a prolonged span of time would end up in the Skid Row soup line unless saved from this fate by a family or by some program of social legislation — irrespective of his drinking habits. The validity of this generalization has already been established by the huge mushrooming of Skid Row that took place during the economic depression of 1929-39. We tend to forget that a similar process is operating continuously, though on a less massive scale, even during times of economic prosperity.

Meanwhile, a high proportion of the men who are in this plight express an interest in obtaining vocational training or retraining to fit

themselves for jobs higher in the socio-economic scale. Their ambitions seem to be modest and within the realm of possibility if they are sincere in their wishes and have the necessary intelligence and drive to carry through. Perhaps, at some future date, a public or private welfare agency might be interested in trying to bring hope and renewed efforts at self-rehabilitation to the homeless men on Skid Row by including occupational therapy as a part of the overall welfare program.

*Chapter 7*

## *ILLNESS AMONG SKID ROW MEN*

How unhealthy are the men on Skid Row in comparison with the general male population of the same age? Do they suffer from diseases and physical impairments that no longer afflict the general population? How many of these men could be made completely or partially self-supporting if they were given medical care that would reduce their physical handicaps? How much medical care is needed and how much would it cost to restore these men to good physical health with maximum possible rehabilitation? This chapter undertakes to answer these questions.

The U.S. Public Health Service has developed a battery of questions which it uses in its National Health Survey to determine the extent of illnesses and the nature of the diseases or other debilitating conditions that are prevalent in the population. These same questions were included in the interviews with the homeless men. By tabulating the responses to these questions in strict accordance with N.H.S. specifications, it is possible to discuss the health of Skid Row men in comparison with that of the general population. These health questions are reproduced in the copy of the interview included in the Appendix.

The body of health information obtained for each man was used in two ways: (1) The record of the man's illnesses was "coded" into specific diseases and disorders, and tabulated to show the prevalence of each kind of condition on Skid Row and the number of days of work lost because of ill health; (2) Dr. Richard Thompson, a physician at the University of Chicago's Billings Hospital, carefully read the medical inventory, obtained for each man in the interview, and used his expert knowledge to perform four tasks:

First, he classified each man, according to the degree of his present physical disability, into one of the following five categories:

Unable to work — Man has an ailment or injury which prevents him from holding a steady job, even part-time.

Severely handicapped — Man has an ailment or injury which severely limits the kind of work he can do or permits him to work only part-time.

Moderately handicapped — Man has ailments or injuries which restrict considerably the kinds of work he can do, but he can hold several types of steady jobs.

Slightly handicapped — Man has ailments or disabilities which place a few restrictions upon his work activities.

Not handicapped — Man has no ailments or disabilities that restrict his work activities.

These categories were established on the basis of the assumption that the man was fitted only for work as a laborer or semi-skilled operative, where a considerable amount of physical exertion would be required.

Second, using the five categories above with the same definitions and assumptions, he estimated how handicapped the man would be if he were to receive the medical care indicated by his condition. In some cases, treatment would do nothing to shift the man from the category assigned to him to another indicating greater physical fitness, while in other cases shifts of one or two places would be possible.

Third, the physician recorded his estimate of how much treatment would be necessary to relieve or remove the conditions reported by the man, insofar as this might be possible. This was expressed in terms of days in hospitals, number of doctor visits, etc.

Fourth, using the standard rates of Blue Cross and Blue Shield and knowledge of hospital charges for items not covered by published rates, he estimated the cost of the needed medical treatment.

Thus, on the basis of the physician's analysis of the medical inventory for each man, it was possible not only to learn how disabled the homeless men are as a group, but also to estimate to what extent they could be rehabilitated by a program of medical care and how much it would cost to carry out such a program. The statistics of this chapter are based upon the National Health Survey methodology and upon the tabulations of the physician's ratings and estimates of disability, potential amount of rehabilitation, needed medical care, and cost of needed medical care.

## I. PREVALENCE OF ILLNESS AND DISABILITY AMONG SKID ROW MEN

The inventory of sicknesses and symptoms of illness experienced by the homeless men was obtained by asking each man the following seven questions:

1. Were you sick at any time last week or the week before?
2. Last week or the week before did you have any accidents or injuries, either at home or away from home?

A MAN WITH SEVERE STOMACH PAINS WAITS FOR THE SALVATION ARMY CLINIC TO OPEN

MAN WOUNDED FROM AN ATTACK ON THE STREET IS GIVEN MEDICAL CARE AT SALVATION ARMY CLINIC

3. Last week or the week before did you feel any ill effects from an earlier accident or injury?
4. Last week or the week before did you take any medicine or treatment for any conditions (besides those which you told me about)?
5. At the present time do you have any ailments or conditions that have continued for a long time? (If "No," ask: Even though they don't bother you all the time?)
6. Have you had any of the conditions listed on this card? (This card, Card A, lists 26 chronic conditions: see Appendix.)
7. Do you have any of the conditions listed on this other card? (The second card, Card B, lists the types of impairments: see Appendix.)

The Public Health Service and other health research organizations have found that only by such a "dredging operation" is it possible to get the public to recall its ailments. (And even with this effort, some are forgotten or omitted, or are unknown to the respondent.) The interviewer thus obtained a list of the respondent's illnesses of the past two weeks, and his chronic conditions (those listed on Card A or those lasting 3 months or longer) of the past year. A series of questions followed, concerning how debilitating each condition had been (number of days of restricted activity, number of days in bed, number of days of work lost, and the type and amount of medical care received).

Number of Conditions. — Approximately one-fifth of the men on Skid Row reported that they had no ailments, while 80 percent reported one or more diseases or sicknesses. (In evaluating the ailments reported, a condition was tabulated as acute if it caused the man to cut down his activities as much as one day or more in the past two weeks.) The percentages of men according to number of ailments were as follows:

| | Percent of men |
|---|---|
| Total | 100.0 |
| No ailments | 20.3 |
| 1 ailment | 23.5 |
| 2 ailments | 19.7 |
| 3 ailments | 16.6 |
| 4 ailments | 6.9 |
| 5 ailments | 4.3 |
| 6 ailments | 3.0 |
| 7 ailments | 2.7 |
| 8 ailments | 1.7 |
| 9 ailments | 0.5 |
| 10 ailments or more | 0.6 |

The average is 2.2 ailments per man. The great majority of the conditions reported were of the variety defined as chronic rather than as acute. In general, men who were older, who were alcoholic derelicts, or who were pensioners had the greatest number of different disorders while young men, light or moderate drinkers, or men who were working had the fewest (Table 7-1).

Disabling Effects of Illness. — Illness caused the average man on Skid Row to reduce his usual activities for 3.3 of the 14 days in the preceding two weeks. This means that during midwinter (the time the survey was taken), between one-fifth and one-fourth of the men on Skid Row (about 23.5 percent) are sick on any given day. This is 3.3 times the rate among the general U.S. population reported by the National Health Survey for this season of the year. If the midwinter sickness rate for Skid Row were continued throughout the year, the average man there would have 85 sick days out of 365.

The men had spent an average of one day of the past two weeks in bed as a result of illness. This was 2.4 times the rate of bed-disability among the general population at this time of year. It is also roughly 4 times the rate for males of all ages and is even 1.7 times the rate for males 65 years of age and over among the general population. Sickness was causing the men on Skid Row to stay away from work or to avoid looking for work for 53 days per year which is 4.1 times the rate among the general working population. It also means that on any given working day in midwinter, slightly more than 20 percent of the workingmen on Skid Row are away from work because of illness. Among the general population, even workers who are 54 years of age lose fewer than one-half this many days of work due to illness.

Thus, no matter how it is viewed, when allowance is made for the age composition of the Skid Row population, it can only be concluded that illness has roughly 2.0 to 2.5 times the disabling effect upon Skid Row residents that it has upon the male population generally. This does not necessarily mean that living on Skid Row causes people to get sick; the greater sickness of Skid Row residents may be due partly to the fact that sick people who have no families to take care of them and who lack funds may move (or be moved) to Skid Row to live. It may also mean that heavy drinking by some of the men causes an increase in illness rates. Some of the possible explanations are evaluated later in this chapter after the health picture has been developed more completely.

Chronic Conditions. — Table 7-2 reports the prevalence of chronic conditions among the Skid Row men. These statistics state the number of cases of each chronic condition that had been present among each 1,000 men during the year preceding the interview. A high percentage of chronic conditions are not easily cured but can only be arrested or

Table 7-1. MEASURES OF PREVALENCE OF ILLNESS AND ITS DISABLING EFFECTS, PER 1,000 MEN: CHICAGO'S SKID ROW, 1957-58

| Item | Number of different ailments | | | Number of acute ailments deleted | Days of restricted activity | | | Days in bed | | | Days work lost | | | Hospitalization | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Chronic | Acute | | Total | Due to chronic condition | Due to acute condition | Total | Due to chronic condition | Due to acute condition | Total | Due to chronic condition | Due to acute condition | Days in last 2 weeks | Times last year | Days last year |
| AGE | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total, all ages | 224 | 203 | 21 | 18 | 329 | 254 | 96 | 104 | 64 | 45 | 204 | 161 | 51 | 466 | 17 | 735 |
| 20-34 years | 140 | 122 | 18 | 14 | 123 | 53 | 70 | 57 | 29 | 27 | 98 | 41 | 57 | 267 | 12 | 449 |
| 35-44 years | 162 | 142 | 20 | 19 | 227 | 163 | 89 | 64 | 30 | 34 | 163 | 106 | 65 | 297 | 17 | 691 |
| 45-54 years | 231 | 212 | 19 | 17 | 313 | 251 | 76 | 85 | 57 | 30 | 216 | 172 | 54 | 369 | 21 | 821 |
| 55-64 years | 300 | 272 | 27 | 19 | 570 | 495 | 98 | 169 | 136 | 42 | 394 | 347 | 58 | 878 | 22 | 1,051 |
| 65 years and over | 262 | 243 | 19 | 20 | 350 | 237 | 150 | 146 | 64 | 95 | 94 | 80 | 14 | 523 | 8 | 468 |
| DRINKING CLASSIFICATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total, all | 224 | 203 | 21 | 18 | 329 | 254 | 96 | 104 | 64 | 45 | 204 | 161 | 51 | 466 | 17 | 735 |
| Teetotaler | 238 | 218 | 20 | 15 | 448 | 357 | 101 | 164 | 115 | 53 | 213 | 198 | 15 | 828 | 14 | 349 |
| Light drinker | 210 | 196 | 15 | 21 | 330 | 288 | 64 | 98 | 66 | 40 | 194 | 175 | 25 | 319 | 12 | 655 |
| Moderate drinker | 204 | 181 | 23 | 18 | 310 | 197 | 130 | 72 | 27 | 46 | 210 | 131 | 81 | 436 | 14 | 887 |
| Heavy drinker | 219 | 196 | 22 | 18 | 251 | 174 | 88 | 104 | 51 | 54 | 180 | 128 | 66 | 297 | 18 | 415 |
| Alcoholic derelict | 284 | 256 | 27 | 18 | 345 | 294 | 105 | 110 | 94 | 28 | 243 | 194 | 68 | 697 | 37 | 1,578 |
| DRINKING-DISABILITY-AGE CLASSIFICATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total, all ages | 224 | 203 | 21 | 18 | 329 | 254 | 96 | 104 | 64 | 45 | 204 | 161 | 51 | 466 | 17 | 735 |
| A. Severely and moderately handicapped | 343 | 313 | 30 | 19 | 581 | 463 | 156 | 185 | 120 | 77 | 352 | 296 | 72 | 885 | 26 | 1,308 |
| 1. Elderly - 65 years of age or older | 308 | 289 | 20 | 20 | 383 | 261 | 168 | 168 | 80 | 105 | 102 | 100 | 2 | 591 | 9 | 523 |
| Teetotaler and light drinkers | 306 | 284 | 22 | 18 | 423 | 276 | 188 | 201 | 103 | 123 | 94 | 90 | 4 | 763 | 4 | 466 |
| Moderate and heavy drinkers | 314 | 299 | 15 | 24 | 293 | 227 | 123 | 95 | 28 | 66 | 122 | 122 | ... | 207 | 19 | 651 |
| 2. Young and middle-aged-20 to 64 years | 358 | 323 | 34 | 19 | 666 | 550 | 151 | 193 | 137 | 64 | 460 | 380 | 101 | 1,011 | 34 | 1,647 |
| Teetotaler and light drinkers | 355 | 329 | 26 | 21 | 765 | 718 | 77 | 208 | 166 | 46 | 503 | 480 | 35 | 978 | 29 | 1,218 |
| Moderate drinkers | 349 | 308 | 41 | 20 | 693 | 466 | 235 | 155 | 80 | 75 | 494 | 326 | 176 | 1,184 | 25 | 2,332 |

Table 7-1. MEASURES OF PREVALENCE OF ILLNESS AND ITS DISABLING EFFECTS, PER 1,000 MEN: CHICAGO'S SKID ROW, 1957-58 (CONTINUED)

| Item | Number of different ailments | | | Number of acute ailments deleted | Days of restricted activity | | | Days in bed | | | Days work lost | | | Hospitalization | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Chronic | Acute | | Total | Due to chronic condition | Due to acute condition | Total | Due to chronic condition | Due to acute condition | Total | Due to chronic condition | Due to acute condition | Days in last 2 weeks | Times last year | Days last year |
| DRINKING-DISABILITY-AGE CLASSIFICATION - Cont'd. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Heavy drinkers and derelicts | 365 | 326 | 40 | 16 | 558 | 433 | 179 | 198 | 137 | 76 | 400 | 312 | 127 | 953 | 43 | 1,706 |
| 20-44 years of age | 333 | 307 | 26 | 23 | 430 | 340 | 136 | 129 | 100 | 29 | 304 | 230 | 94 | 851 | 45 | 1,927 |
| 45-64 years of age | 381 | 335 | 46 | 13 | 619 | 478 | 199 | 232 | 155 | 99 | 447 | 351 | 142 | 1,003 | 41 | 1,599 |
| B. Slightly and not handicapped | 121 | 105 | 13 | 17 | 111 | 73 | 43 | 33 | 16 | 17 | 76 | 44 | 32 | 103 | 9 | 237 |
| 1. Elderly - 65 years of age or older | 75 | 60 | 15 | 20 | 220 | 140 | 80 | 60 | ... | 60 | 60 | ... | 60 | 250 | 5 | 250 |
| Teetotaler and light drinkers | 62 | 62 | ... | 15 | 215 | 215 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Moderate and heavy drinkers | 100 | 57 | 43 | 29 | 229 | ... | 229 | 171 | ... | 171 | 171 | ... | 171 | 714 | 14 | 714 |
| 2. Young and middle-aged - 20 to 64 years | 124 | 111 | 13 | 17 | 103 | 68 | 41 | 31 | 18 | 14 | 77 | 47 | 30 | 92 | 9 | 236 |
| Teetotaler and light drinkers | 104 | 93 | 10 | 18 | 96 | 68 | 29 | 34 | 26 | 8 | 77 | 52 | 24 | 86 | 8 | 211 |
| Moderate drinkers | 118 | 104 | 14 | 11 | 128 | 70 | 68 | 22 | 4 | 18 | 92 | 49 | 43 | 69 | 6 | 167 |
| Heavy drinkers and derelicts | 150 | 136 | 14 | 20 | 92 | 68 | 34 | 35 | 18 | 17 | 67 | 40 | 27 | 116 | 13 | 313 |
| 20-44 years of age | 135 | 118 | 16 | 18 | 94 | 57 | 54 | 32 | 2 | 30 | 66 | 23 | 44 | 87 | 6 | 103 |
| 45-64 years of age | 170 | 159 | 11 | 24 | 89 | 82 | 7 | 40 | 40 | ... | 68 | 63 | 5 | 157 | 23 | 597 |
| PENSION STATUS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 224 | 203 | 21 | 18 | 329 | 254 | 96 | 104 | 64 | 45 | 204 | 161 | 51 | 466 | 17 | 735 |
| Not a pensioner | 178 | 161 | 18 | 14 | 155 | 104 | 68 | 62 | 35 | 31 | 100 | 63 | 45 | 244 | 12 | 306 |
| Pension - General Public Assistance (welfare) | 312 | 284 | 28 | 19 | 807 | 699 | 153 | 208 | 158 | 64 | 519 | 468 | 57 | 917 | 30 | 1,600 |
| Pension - retirement | 284 | 265 | 20 | 25 | 391 | 297 | 97 | 124 | 65 | 60 | 179 | 151 | 28 | 656 | 16 | 894 |
| Temporary pensions - unemployment compensation | 176 | 154 | 22 | 25 | 212 | 138 | 75 | 53 | 30 | 23 | 160 | 104 | 64 | 350 | 13 | 372 |
| No information or evaluation impossible | 313 | 284 | 29 | 19 | 466 | 306 | 233 | 220 | 107 | 130 | 319 | 204 | 144 | 861 | 43 | 2,633 |

Table 7-1. MEASURES OF PREVALENCE OF ILLNESS AND ITS DISABLING EFFECTS, PER 1,000 MEN: CHICAGO'S SKID ROW, 1957-58 (CONTINUED)

| Item | Number of different ailments | | | Number of acute ailments deleted | Days of restricted activity | | | Days in bed | | | Days work lost | | | Hospitalization | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Chronic | Acute | | Total | Due to chronic condition | Due to acute condition | Total | Due to chronic condition | Due to acute condition | Total | Due to chronic condition | Due to acute condition | Days in last 2 weeks | Times last year | Days last year |
| EMPLOYMENT STATUS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 224 | 203 | 21 | 18 | 329 | 254 | 96 | 104 | 64 | 45 | 204 | 161 | 51 | 466 | 17 | 735 |
| Employed - steady job | 136 | 122 | 14 | 15 | 56 | 20 | 35 | 18 | 6 | 13 | 41 | 14 | 27 | 191 | 7 | 145 |
| Employed - spot job | 185 | 167 | 18 | 18 | 101 | 49 | 59 | 53 | 15 | 38 | 71 | 30 | 46 | 199 | 14 | 317 |
| Unemployed | 187 | 173 | 14 | 25 | 126 | 93 | 44 | 54 | 41 | 16 | 101 | 76 | 34 | 197 | 12 | 623 |
| Not in labor force: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unable to work | 330 | 310 | 21 | 17 | 840 | 753 | 127 | 243 | 172 | 88 | 507 | 488 | 26 | 1,092 | 26 | 1,439 |
| Did not care to work | 266 | 242 | 24 | 16 | 332 | 278 | 104 | 39 | 16 | 23 | 118 | 74 | 44 | 314 | 11 | 370 |
| Possibly in labor force: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Temporarily ill | 353 | 279 | 74 | 14 | 936 | 503 | 497 | 358 | 199 | 167 | 632 | 360 | 309 | 1,265 | 59 | 2,546 |
| DISABILITY STATUS | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 224 | 203 | 21 | 18 | 329 | 254 | 96 | 104 | 64 | 45 | 204 | 161 | 51 | 457 | 17 | 735 |
| Too old to work | 266 | 243 | 23 | 22 | 289 | 119 | 176 | 189 | 50 | 140 | ... | ... | ... | 370 | 10 | 376 |
| Unable to work | 456 | 420 | 36 | 12 | 1,256 | 1,144 | 392 | 744 | 640 | 360 | 904 | 824 | 160 | 5,196 | 44 | 2,048 |
| Severely handicapped | 448 | 414 | 34 | 10 | 1,093 | 992 | 176 | 306 | 270 | 49 | 730 | 669 | 78 | 1,734 | 61 | 3,011 |
| Moderately handicapped | 325 | 295 | 30 | 22 | 461 | 354 | 130 | 112 | 62 | 50 | 306 | 233 | 88 | 522 | 18 | 978 |
| Slightly handicapped | 212 | 194 | 18 | 20 | 213 | 154 | 71 | 63 | 35 | 28 | 144 | 92 | 52 | 181 | 11 | 260 |
| Not handicapped | 40 | 32 | 8 | 15 | 20 | 2 | 19 | 7 | ... | 7 | 17 | 2 | 16 | 34 | 7 | 217 |
| REHABILITATION CLASSIFICATION | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 224 | 203 | 21 | 18 | 329 | 254 | 96 | 104 | 64 | 45 | 204 | 161 | 51 | 466 | 17 | 735 |
| No change after medical treatment | 208 | 191 | 17 | 16 | 311 | 253 | 78 | 103 | 66 | 44 | 187 | 162 | 30 | 508 | 16 | 671 |
| Too old to work | 266 | 243 | 23 | 22 | 289 | 119 | 176 | 189 | 50 | 140 | ... | ... | ... | 370 | 10 | 376 |
| Both before and after: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unable to work | 450 | 415 | 35 | 15 | 1,220 | 1,080 | 350 | 790 | 660 | 310 | 880 | 780 | 100 | 6,495 | 55 | 2,560 |
| Severely handicapped | 469 | 442 | 27 | 3 | 1,108 | 1,077 | 143 | 298 | 292 | 57 | 763 | 760 | 36 | 2,032 | 62 | 2,901 |
| Moderately handicapped | 360 | 335 | 24 | 19 | 558 | 472 | 105 | 133 | 88 | 45 | 381 | 318 | 75 | 616 | 19 | 877 |
| Slightly handicapped | 247 | 227 | 20 | 15 | 236 | 203 | 48 | 58 | 37 | 21 | 146 | 125 | 20 | 227 | 12 | 408 |
| Not handicapped | 40 | 32 | 8 | 15 | 20 | 2 | 19 | 7 | ... | 7 | 17 | 2 | 16 | 34 | 7 | 217 |
| Rehabilitation status improved after medical treatment | 256 | 228 | 28 | 23 | 366 | 257 | 132 | 106 | 60 | 46 | 239 | 157 | 92 | 380 | 18 | 864 |
| Rehabilitated to be: | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Moderately handicapped | 440 | 403 | 37 | 21 | 1,060 | 913 | 210 | 327 | 244 | 84 | 702 | 597 | 129 | 1,244 | 50 | 3,036 |
| Slightly handicapped | 288 | 253 | 35 | 24 | 343 | 237 | 126 | 91 | 47 | 44 | 202 | 137 | 77 | 458 | 15 | 1,124 |
| Not handicapped | 197 | 175 | 22 | 23 | 239 | 135 | 120 | 71 | 32 | 40 | 169 | 80 | 95 | 149 | 14 | 240 |

retarded (especially under the conditions of minimum medical care found on Skid Row). Therefore, these statistics are a fairly true measure of current prevalence of these conditions among homeless men. This being the case, one notes the following:

| Disease | Approximate prevalence |
|---|---|
| Tuberculosis | 1 man in 30 |
| Mental illness | 1 man in 11 |
| Mental and nervous trouble (in addition to above) | 1 man in 11 |
| Chronic disorders of the digestive system | 1 man in 10 |
| Arthritis and rheumatism | 1 man in 8 |
| Other diseases of muscles, bones, joints | 1 man in 4 |
| Impaired hearing | 1 man in 9 |
| Impaired vision | 1 man in 16 |
| Hernia | 1 man in 12 |
| Hypertension | 1 man in 16 |
| Hemorrhoids | 1 man in 14 |
| Heart diseases | 1 man in 16 |
| Ulcers of the stomach | 1 man in 40 |
| Asthma | 1 man in 11 |
| Skin infection | 1 man in 25 |
| Missing foot or arm | 1 man in 16 |

These prevalence rates are considerably higher than those the National Health Survey is finding for adult males.

Chronic ailments are generally afflictions of middle and old age. Although this is true also for Skid Row men, the rates of chronic illness are almost unbelievably high, even among younger men. Young men tend to be especially severely afflicted with:

Tuberculosis
Mental illness and nervous troubles
Miscellaneous disorders of the respiratory system
Ulcers of the stomach
Arthritis and rheumatism
Conditions of bones, joints

Even more unusual is the fact that the highest rates for many of the chronic ailments are found not among the men 65 years of age or older but among the middle-aged men. This may be the difference between pensioners, who have access to medical care, and nonpensioners, who have no access to medical care. For example, rates of the following

Table 7-2. NUMBER OF CHRONIC CONDITIONS BY AGE PER 1,000 MEN: CHICAGO'S SKID ROW, 1957-58

| Chronic condition | Rate per 1,000 in age-group | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | 20-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 and over |
| Tuberculosis, all forms | 33 | 32 | 40 | 46 | 10 |
| Malignant neoplasms | 4 | ... | 12 | ... | ... |
| Benign and unspecified neoplasms | 1 | 3 | ... | ... | ... |
| Asthma and hay fever | 91 | 50 | 87 | 170 | 90 |
| Other allergies | 16 | 7 | 22 | 27 | 10 |
| Diabetes mellitus | 6 | ... | 12 | 9 | 7 |
| Anemia | 3 | ... | ... | ... | 17 |
| Headache and migraine | 16 | 22 | 6 | 27 | 10 |
| Mental illness | 93 | 125 | 117 | 76 | 10 |
| Ill-defined mental and nervous trouble | 90 | 103 | 101 | 79 | 60 |
| Heart disease | 66 | 19 | 54 | 122 | 120 |
| Hypertension without heart involvement | 66 | 65 | 81 | 36 | 77 |
| Varicose veins | 54 | 16 | 59 | 79 | 90 |
| Hemorrhoids | 77 | 40 | 99 | 116 | 70 |
| Other diseases of the circulatory system | 16 | 9 | 18 | 33 | 10 |
| Sinusitis | 123 | 100 | 115 | 179 | 120 |
| Bronchitis | 34 | 12 | 34 | 70 | 40 |
| Other diseases of the respiratory system | 50 | 46 | 42 | 61 | 60 |
| Ulcer of stomach and duodenum | 28 | 36 | 18 | 27 | 30 |
| Hernia | 81 | 29 | 77 | 97 | 170 |
| Diseases of the gallbladder | 7 | ... | ... | 18 | 20 |
| Constipation | 5 | ... | ... | 9 | 20 |
| Other diseases of the digestive system | 103 | 86 | 125 | 118 | 80 |
| Other diseases of the genito-urinary system | 56 | 33 | 42 | 91 | 90 |
| Skin infections and diseases | 40 | 36 | 12 | 46 | 90 |
| Arthritis and rheumatism | 132 | 52 | 109 | 255 | 190 |
| Back conditions | 29 | 31 | 52 | 6 | 10 |
| Other conditions of the muscles, bones, and joints | 238 | 182 | 250 | 313 | 247 |
| Impairment of vision | 70 | 28 | 59 | 100 | 137 |
| Impairment of hearing | 120 | 52 | 135 | 137 | 207 |
| Paralysis of extremities and/or trunk | 8 | 5 | 6 | 24 | ... |
| Absence of extremities except fingers and toes | 9 | ... | 6 | 27 | 10 |
| Other chronic conditions | 265 | 141 | 335 | 319 | 330 |
| Intracranial lesions | 2 | ... | ... | 9 | ... |

diseases are lower among the older men than among the middle-aged men:

Tuberculosis
Asthma and hay fever
Mental illness
Nervous conditions, ill defined
Hemorrhoids
Sinusitis
Bronchitis
Miscellaneous diseases of the digestive system
Arthritis and rheumatism
Back conditions
Other conditions of muscles, bones, joints
Paralysis of extremities
Absence of extremities.

CRUTCHES ARE A FAMILIAR SIGHT ON SKID ROW

This is a rather long and impressive list and could not possibly be a chance occurrence. One can only conclude that the older men live more regular lives, take better care of themselves, and receive more medical care than the middle-aged men on Skid Row.

Acute Conditions. — Acute conditions are defined as those illnesses or injury conditions of 3 months' or less duration that are not arbitrarily defined as chronic (Card A). Table 7-3 measures the prevalence of acute conditions which had afflicted the respondents during the two weeks preceding the interview. The common cold and other acute respiratory conditions are the most common. About 1 person in 14 had suffered one or more days of reduced activity in the two-week period because of a respiratory condition.

Injury is the most common form of acute condition on Skid Row:

2.4 percent were suffering from a fracture or dislocation
1.2 percent were suffering from a contusion
0.9 percent were suffering from open wounds and lacerations
0.5 percent were suffering from sprains and strains
1.5 percent were suffering from other current injuries

During the two weeks preceding the interview, 1 man in 8 had one day or more of reduced activity because of injury. (This does not allow for duplication, although a few men did have more than one injury.)

Table 7-3. NUMBER OF ACUTE CONDITIONS BY AGE PER 1,000 MEN: CHICAGO'S SKID ROW, 1957-58

| Acute condition | Rate per 1,000 in age group | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | 20-44 | 45-54 | 55-64 | 65 and over |
| *Other infective and parasitic diseases | 2 | ... | 6 | ... | ... |
| Diseases of the ear | 4 | ... | 6 | 9 | ... |
| Common cold | 35 | 40 | 32 | 46 | 20 |
| Other acute upper respiratory conditions | 5 | 5 | ... | 9 | 10 |
| Other respiratory conditions | 36 | 46 | 24 | 33 | 40 |
| Dental conditions | 5 | 10 | ... | 9 | ... |
| "Intestinal flue" | 5 | 10 | 6 | ... | ... |
| Other digestive system conditions | 15 | 5 | 22 | 9 | 30 |
| Headaches | 2 | 5 | ... | ... | ... |
| Genito-urinary disorders | 5 | ... | ... | 24 | ... |
| Diseases of the skin | 8 | 5 | 6 | 15 | 10 |
| Diseases of the musculoskeletal system | 10 | 10 | 12 | 9 | 10 |
| Fractures and dislocations | 24 | 19 | 28 | 27 | 23 |
| Sprains and strains | 5 | 5 | ... | 9 | 10 |
| Open wounds and lacerations | 9 | 14 | 16 | ... | ... |
| Contusions and superficial injuries | 12 | 9 | 12 | 27 | ... |
| Other current injuries | 15 | 5 | 16 | 24 | 20 |
| All other acute conditions | 9 | 9 | 4 | 15 | 13 |

*Except common childhood diseases and the "virus".

Except for tuberculosis, it appears that infections and parasitic diseases (typhoid fever, dysentery, venereal diseases, scarlet fever, smallpox, etc.) are as uncommon on Skid Row as elsewhere in the population. It is entirely possible that some of these diseases were present but were reported as other conditions or not reported at all. Also, men with infectious diseases are removed from the hotels when such cases are detected.

To summarize: The statistics for acute conditions probably are grossly understated. Despite this, when adjusted for age and season, they show an incidence that is about as high as that of the general population. It is very probable, therefore, that acute conditions occur at considerably higher rates on Skid Row than among the general population. Nevertheless, the conditions reported are of the same general types as those of the general population. The major exception to this is injuries which occur on Skid Row at a rate which is phenomenally higher than that found in the general population.

Diseases and Prevalence of Illness by Drinking-Disability-Age Classification. — Table 7-1 provides information concerning the prevalence of illness among homeless men on Skid Row according to their drinking-disability-age classification. This table shows that:

a. The average man who is moderately or severely handicapped has an average of 3 times as many different ailments as men who are only slightly or not handicapped. He has about 5 times as many days of restricted activity, spends 6 times as many days in bed, and loses 5 times as many days of work from sickness as the average man with no handicap or only a slight one.
b. This burden of ill health falls more heavily upon the group of young and middle-aged men who are handicapped than upon the handicapped men aged 65 and over. The severely handicapped younger men have more ailments, pass more days in restricted activity, spend more days in bed, and lose more days of work if working than the handicapped pensioners.
c. It is the teetotalers and light drinkers who are the most unhealthy and suffer the most. This may seem paradoxical in view of the fact that heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts have higher illness rates for acute diseases, and more different ailments per man. But they have fewer days of restricted activity, fewer days in bed, and fewer days of work lost than do the light drinkers and teetotalers. The differences are due to the very high rate of illness from chronic diseases among the light drinkers and teetotalers.

These findings very clearly imply that one very large group on Skid Row consists of middle-aged nonalcoholic workingmen who do not drink

or drink very sparingly, who have suffered a breakdown in health, and who can neither afford treatment nor command a steady job. They are perhaps the cruelest example in our society of lack of protection against chronic illness that strikes through no fault of the individual. Public welfare helps some of these people.

What is the distribution of ailments within the categories of the disability-drinking-age classification?

The younger and middle-aged men (20-64 years of age) who are severely handicapped were suffering from the following diseases and at the following rates:

| Disease | Cases per 1,000 men: Teetotalers and light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts |
|---|---|---|---|
| Tuberculosis | 69 | 172 | 44 |
| Asthma and hay fever | 194 | 103 | 156 |
| Migraine and headache | 50 | 52 | 22 |
| Ill-defined nervous and mental trouble | 143 | 181 | 169 |
| Heart disease | 162 | 103 | 98 |
| Hypertension | 46 | 181 | 178 |
| Varicose veins | 69 | 78 | 93 |
| Hemorrhoids | 106 | 103 | 98 |
| Other diseases of circulatory system | 56 | 17 | 22 |
| Sinusitis | 162 | 233 | 209 |
| Bronchitis | 97 | 52 | 71 |
| Other diseases of respiratory system | 42 | 78 | 98 |
| Ulcer of stomach and duodenum | 56 | 17 | 89 |
| Hernia | 111 | 26 | 80 |
| Other diseases of digestive system | 181 | 138 | 236 |
| Arthritis and rheumatism | 394 | 250 | 133 |
| Other conditions of muscles, bones, joints | 380 | 328 | 338 |
| Impairment of vision | 120 | 103 | 76 |
| Impairment of hearing | 167 | 129 | 120 |
| Diseases of the genito-urinary system | 134 | 26 | 62 |

These men have an average of 3.3 chronic conditions apiece. Not all of these cases are without care. At least 40 percent of them are receiving some medical aid on public assistance and are housed on Skid Row simply because of economic necessity or welfare policy.

It is estimated that Chicago's Skid Rows together contain the following numbers of moderately or severely handicapped men of each drinking classification:

| Drinking classification | Number of men |
|---|---|
| Total | 3,900 |
| Teetotalers and light drinkers | 1,500 |
| Moderate drinkers | 800 |
| Heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts | 1,600 |

Young and middle-aged men who are not handicapped or only slightly handicapped nevertheless reported an average of more than one chronic ailment apiece. Men who drank more heavily reported more different disorders but less disability than men who did not drink. Following are the disorders that were reported most frequently, according to the drinking classification of the men:

| | Cases per 1,000 men | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chronic diseases | Teetotalers and light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts |
| Tuberculosis, all forms | 9 | 26 | ... |
| Asthma and hay fever | 53 | 40 | 45 |
| Mental illness | 28 | 26 | 219 |
| Ill-defined mental and nervous trouble | 69 | 35 | 55 |
| Heart disease | 28 | ... | ... |
| Hypertension | 9 | 26 | 35 |
| Varicose veins | 34 | 13 | 19 |
| Hemorrhoids | 56 | 70 | 64 |
| Sinusitis | 63 | 75 | 93 |
| Miscellaneous respiratory diseases | 28 | 18 | 48 |
| Hernia | 50 | 79 | 32 |
| Other diseases of digestive system | 91 | 22 | 32 |
| Arthritis | 12 | 61 | 22 |
| Back conditions | 18 | 53 | 10 |
| Other conditions of muscles, bones, joints | 147 | 149 | 181 |
| Impairment of hearing | 25 | 92 | 116 |

Even though these men are reported as being not handicapped or slightly handicapped, it is evident that they suffer from a variety of minor and more serious chronic ailments at rates that are not found in the general population. They show much evidence of being in substandard health, and many of them are in poor mental health.

The Dental Condition of Men on Skid Row. — During the interview, a subsample consisting of 75 percent of the total was asked the following 4 questions:

1. How many teeth have you had pulled or knocked out?
2. How many teeth have you had replaced by dental work?
3. How long has it been since you went to a dentist?
4. Are your teeth bothering you now, or do you need to have dental work done?

From the responses to these questions, it is possible to build up a general over-all picture of the dental condition of Skid Row residents:

| Dental condition | Percent of all men |
|---|---|
| Total | 100.0 |
| Edentate (has lost all teeth, none replaced) | 16.9 |
| Has 10 or more teeth missing, not replaced | 23.7 |
| Has 5-9 teeth missing, not replaced | 12.9 |
| Has 1-4 teeth missing, not replaced | 22.4 |
| Has full set of dentures | 11.1 |
| Has all of own teeth or all lost teeth replaced | 8.2 |
| No information | 4.7 |

Note: Missing wisdom teeth, teeth replaced with bridgework, and partial plates were not counted as missing teeth.

Probably it would be difficult to find a segment of the population with worse average dental condition. On Skid Row teeth are badly neglected, they are sometimes lost in fights or in the process of being jackrolled, and they are often not replaced when lost.

Following is the distribution of length of time since a dentist was last seen:

| Length of time | Percent of men with some of own teeth remaining |
|---|---|
| Total | 100.0 |
| 5 years or more | 48.7 |
| 2 to 4 years | 21.1 |
| 1 to 2 years | 11.3 |
| Less than 1 year | 13.3 |
| No answer | 5.8 |

Of those who had seen a dentist within the past year, very few had gone for preventive dentistry; the majority had seen a dentist to have aching teeth pulled. This is the general practice among homeless men. They lack the money to have cavities filled and almost never visit the dentist except to have teeth pulled. At least one of the missions provides free tooth-pulling service; a man with an aching tooth attends the service and can have the tooth pulled afterward by a dentist who kindly donates his services on selected nights of the week.

When asked if they needed to have dental work done at the time of the interview, 49.6 percent of the men who still had one or more of their own teeth reported "yes."

A study of how dental condition varies with other characteristics of the men (tabular data not shown) yielded the following findings:

a. The older the man, the more deteriorated tend to be his teeth. Among men 65 years of age or over, 41 percent were toothless and without dentures, and an additional 29 percent had lost ten or more teeth without having them replaced. Even men 35 to 44 years of age had high percentages of missing teeth. One man in 13 among this group was already toothless and without dentures, and an additional 1 in 7 had lost 10 or more teeth without replacing them. Only 11 percent of the men in this age range had lost no teeth or had replaced all they had lost.
b. The dental condition of men who are seriously disabled or who have severe chronic ailments is much worse than that of men who are not handicapped.
c. Among the men who are not handicapped or only slightly handicapped, the dental condition of the men who drink heavily is worse than that of men who do not drink so heavily.
d. The teeth of pensioners on general public assistance were in a very deteriorated state: almost one-third were toothless without dentures, and an additional one-fourth had lost 10 or more teeth without replacing them.

## II. POTENTIALITIES FOR IMPROVING THE HEALTH AND RELIEVING THE DISABILITIES OF SKID ROW MEN

After he had put each man into one of the disability categories, the physician was asked to imagine that a comprehensive program of physical rehabilitation was to be carried out in which each man would be given the minimum essential medical treatment and care appropriate to his condition. The physician was asked to omit extremely costly treatments that probably could never be made available to these men. Then, assuming that the other minimum treatments were somehow provided, the physician estimated how handicapped each man would still be after the treatment. The same categories and assumptions made in the original rating were applied in the estimate of the extent of physical disability that would remain after medical treatment. It was assumed that if there were a problem of alcoholism, it would be solved by another program. This yielded the best estimate possible of the potential for physical rehabilitation of the men, apart from drinking problems. Following is a tabulation of the results:

| Rehabilitation status after treatment | Percent of the men | Implied number of men on Skid Rows of Chicago |
|---|---|---|
| No change after medical treatment | | |
| Too old to work | 8.8 | 1,049 |
| Unable to work, both before and after | 1.2 | 143 |
| Severely handicapped, both before and after | 5.7 | 680 |
| Moderately handicapped, both before and after | 14.3 | 1,705 |
| Slightly handicapped, both before and after | 8.5 | 1,014 |
| Rehabilitation status improved by treatment | | |
| Rehabilitated to be only moderately handicapped | 3.6 | 429 |
| Rehabilitated to be only slightly handicapped | 11.9 | 1,419 |
| Rehabilitated to be not handicapped at all | 17.5 | 2,087 |
| Originally not handicapped, no treatment needed | 28.5 | 3,399 |

Thus, a program of medical treatment, while improving the well-being of a number of unhealthy men, would also substantially improve the potential earning power of 33 percent, or roughly 4,000 men. The drastic change that could be effected may be noted by comparing the percentage distribution by disability status before and after treatment:

| Disability status | Before treatment | After treatment | Change (points) |
|---|---|---|---|
| Too old to work, unable to work . . . | 10.2 | 10.0 | - 0.2 |
| Severely handicapped . . . . . | 9.4 | 5.7 | - 3.7 |
| Moderately handicapped . . . . . | 26.8 | 17.9 | - 8.9 |
| Slightly handicapped . . . . . | 25.1 | 20.4 | - 4.7 |
| Not handicapped . . . . . | 28.5 | 46.0 | 17.5 |

After such a treatment program, almost one-half of the men would not be physically handicapped, and almost one-third of those who had been either severely handicapped or moderately handicapped would be transferred to the "slightly handicapped" category. Thus, a systematic program of medical treatment for the purpose of rehabilitation could literally transform thousands of the Skid Row men from dependent, unemployable, cast-off dregs on the labor market to potentially self-sustaining earners. It could make hundreds of men now severely handicapped partially self-supporting or even entirely self-supporting under sheltered conditions. Such a program must be accompanied, of course, by a program of treatment for alcoholism. As has already been shown, however, many of the handicapped men are not alcoholic. To be sure, some of them are "bums" who would not work, but they probably constitute a minority of Skid Row men.

Cost of a Program of Medical Rehabilitation. — The question immediately arises, "How much would it cost to provide the rehabilitation treatment estimated by the physician's diagnosis and prescription?" In order to make the statistics concrete, they have been expressed by the cost for each man instead of by costs for all the men on Skid Row. This approach also makes it possible to answer questions concerning, "How many men could be rehabilitated for how many dollars?" Table 7-4 provides the necessary information for a variety of categories of men. For an average Skid Row man with an average amount of disease and disability, the medical care required would be as follows:

| Medical care required | Average per man |
|---|---|
| Days in hospital | 5.6 |
| Days as outpatient | 2.1 |
| Follow-up visits to clinic | 4.7 |
| Total cost | $242 |
| Hospitalization | $105 |
| Cost of clinic visits | 37 |
| Cost of surgeon | 27 |
| Cost of drugs | 74 |
| Time from work (if working) | 2.1 weeks |

The cost of rehabilitating a younger man is less than that of rehabilitating a middle-aged or older man because the younger man has fewer ailments. The cost of rehabilitating a teetotaler is about the same as that of rehabilitating a moderate drinker; the cost of "patching up" an alcoholic derelict is considerably greater because he has more ailments and more serious ailments. A better idea of the cost may be obtained by classifying the men according to the rehabilitation status:

| Change in medical status | Cost | Estimated number of men in Chicago | Estimated total cost (thousands of dollars) |
|---|---|---|---|
| No change after medical treatment | | | |
| Too old to work | $170 | 1,049 | $178 |
| Unable to work, both before and after | 380 | 143 | 54 |
| Severely handicapped, both before and after | 892 | 680 | 607 |
| Moderately handicapped, both before and after | 315 | 1,705 | 537 |
| Slightly handicapped, both before and after | 135 | 1,014 | 137 |
| Improved by medical treatment | | | |
| Improved to be moderately handicapped | 1,625 | 429 | 697 |
| Improved to be slightly handicapped | 303 | 1,419 | 430 |
| Improved to be not handicapped at all | 193 | 2,087 | 403 |

**Table 7-4. MEDICAL CARE NEEDED, COST OF NEEDED MEDICAL CARE, AND TIME FROM WORK REQUIRED TO OBTAIN NEEDED MEDICAL CARE: VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF CHICAGO'S SKID ROW MEN, 1957-58**

| Item | Medical care needed per 100 men | | | | Cost of needed care (dollars per man) | | | | | Time from work (weeks per 100 men) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Days in hospital | Days as out-patient | Follow-up visits | Total doctor-clinic visits | Total cost | Cost of hospitalization | Cost of clinic | Cost of surgery | Cost of drugs | |
| AGE | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total, all ages | 566 | 211 | 465 | 746 | $ 242 | $ 105 | $ 37 | $ 27 | $ 74 | 211 |
| 20-34 years | 251 | 167 | 250 | 417 | 128 | 47 | 21 | 17 | 44 | 101 |
| 35-44 years | 476 | 215 | 431 | 808 | 214 | 88 | 40 | 15 | 70 | 161 |
| 45-54 years | 636 | 247 | 544 | 834 | 279 | 117 | 41 | 35 | 86 | 259 |
| 55-64 years | 974 | 277 | 731 | 1,108 | 386 | 180 | 54 | 41 | 110 | 323 |
| 65 years and over | 304 | 99 | 211 | 310 | 128 | 56 | 15 | 20 | 36 | 142 |
| DRINKING CLASSIFICATION | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 566 | 211 | 465 | 746 | 242 | 105 | 37 | 27 | 74 | 211 |
| Teetotaler | 557 | 151 | 473 | 753 | 244 | 103 | 37 | 33 | 71 | 201 |
| Light drinker | 355 | 182 | 350 | 531 | 168 | 66 | 26 | 18 | 58 | 164 |
| Moderate drinker | 723 | 223 | 538 | 919 | 286 | 134 | 45 | 26 | 81 | 270 |
| Heavy drinker | 413 | 239 | 438 | 677 | 212 | 76 | 34 | 27 | 76 | 159 |
| Alcoholic derelict | 986 | 282 | 615 | 998 | 371 | 183 | 49 | 44 | 95 | 299 |
| DRINKING-DISABILITY-AGE CLASSIFICATION | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 566 | 211 | 465 | 746 | 242 | 105 | 37 | 27 | 74 | 211 |
| A. Severely and moderately handicapped | 1,098 | 272 | 805 | 1,228 | 429 | 203 | 60 | 45 | 120 | 392 |
| 1. Elderly: 65 years of age or older | 359 | 107 | 247 | 354 | 148 | 66 | 17 | 22 | 42 | 161 |
| Teetotaler and light drinker | 268 | 89 | 175 | 264 | 113 | 50 | 13 | 20 | 30 | 134 |
| Moderate and heavy drinker | 564 | 146 | 410 | 555 | 225 | 104 | 26 | 26 | 68 | 223 |
| 2. Young and middle-aged: 20-64 years | 1,417 | 344 | 1,045 | 1,605 | 550 | 262 | 78 | 55 | 153 | 492 |
| Teetotaler and light drinker | 1,081 | 302 | 931 | 1,385 | 452 | 200 | 67 | 43 | 141 | 418 |
| Moderate drinker | 2,055 | 382 | 1,371 | 2,322 | 737 | 380 | 112 | 53 | 186 | 706 |
| Heavy drinker and derelict | 1,411 | 364 | 986 | 1,447 | 549 | 261 | 72 | 69 | 148 | 453 |
| 20-44 years of age | 999 | 358 | 734 | 1,092 | 426 | 185 | 55 | 66 | 122 | 364 |
| 45-64 years of age | 1,609 | 367 | 1,107 | 1,618 | 608 | 298 | 80 | 70 | 160 | 495 |
| B. Slightly and not handicapped | 103 | 158 | 170 | 328 | 81 | 19 | 17 | 11 | 34 | 54 |
| 1. Elderly: 65 years of age or older | 85 | 70 | 65 | 135 | 50 | 16 | 7 | 12 | 14 | 85 |
| Teetotaler and light drinker | 77 | 54 | 54 | 108 | 43 | 14 | 5 | 77 | 15 | 46 |
| Moderate and heavy drinker | 100 | 100 | 86 | 186 | 61 | 19 | 10 | 21 | 11 | 100 |
| 2. Young and middle-aged 20-64 years | 105 | 164 | 177 | 342 | 83 | 19 | 18 | 11 | 36 | 54 |

Table 7-4. MEDICAL CARE NEEDED, COST OF NEEDED MEDICAL CARE, AND TIME FROM WORK REQUIRED TO OBTAIN NEEDED MEDICAL CARE: VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF CHICAGO'S SKID ROW MEN, 1957-58 (CONTINUED)

| Item | Medical care needed per 100 men | | | | Cost of needed care (dollars per man) | | | | | Time from work (weeks per 100 men) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Days in hospital | Days as out-patient | Follow-up visits | Total doctor-clinic visits | Total cost | Cost of hospitali-zation | Cost of clinic | Cost of surgery | Cost of drugs | |
| DRINKING-DISABILITY-AGE CLASSIFICATION - Continued | | | | | | | | | | |
| Teetotaler and light drinker | 105 | 140 | 182 | 322 | $ 81 | $ 19 | $ 16 | $ 13 | $ 33 | 52 |
| Moderate drinker | 125 | 169 | 171 | 340 | 87 | 23 | 18 | 13 | 34 | 71 |
| Heavy drinker and derelict | 90 | 187 | 177 | 364 | 82 | 16 | 19 | 7 | 39 | 43 |
| 20-44 years of age | 74 | 169 | 159 | 328 | 72 | 14 | 17 | 4 | 38 | 30 |
| 45-64 years of age | 111 | 211 | 202 | 412 | 96 | 20 | 21 | 13 | 41 | 61 |
| PENSION STATUS | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 566 | 211 | 465 | 746 | 242 | 105 | 37 | 27 | 74 | 211 |
| Not a pensioner | 389 | 196 | 384 | 617 | 186 | 72 | 31 | 21 | 63 | 152 |
| Pension: General Public Assistance | 1,251 | 275 | 906 | 1,458 | 474 | 232 | 71 | 42 | 128 | 434 |
| Pension: retirement | 508 | 153 | 290 | 446 | 192 | 94 | 22 | 24 | 53 | 182 |
| Temporary pension: unemployment compensation | 290 | 232 | 294 | 526 | 171 | 54 | 26 | 34 | 57 | 136 |
| No information | 647 | 271 | 581 | 856 | 290 | 120 | 43 | 36 | 91 | 261 |
| VETERAN STATUS | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 491 | 212 | 442 | 722 | 226 | 91 | 36 | 27 | 72 | 181 |
| No military service | 467 | 206 | 445 | 742 | 219 | 86 | 36 | 23 | 74 | 173 |
| Military service before World War II | 1,034 | 246 | 695 | 1,082 | 398 | 191 | 53 | 56 | 97 | 383 |
| World War II | 287 | 220 | 340 | 560 | 165 | 53 | 28 | 20 | 64 | 106 |
| Military service after World War II | 116 | 155 | 150 | 305 | 83 | 22 | 16 | 12 | 34 | 54 |
| No information | 340 | 207 | 557 | 763 | 189 | 63 | 39 | 13 | 75 | 63 |
| EMPLOYMENT STATUS | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 566 | 211 | 465 | 746 | 242 | 105 | 37 | 27 | 74 | 211 |
| Employed - steady job | 170 | 161 | 264 | 425 | 112 | 31 | 21 | 14 | 46 | 76 |
| Employed - spot job | 290 | 218 | 324 | 542 | 168 | 54 | 28 | 24 | 65 | 112 |
| Unemployed | 278 | 221 | 360 | 582 | 158 | 51 | 29 | 20 | 58 | 110 |
| Not in labor force: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unable to work | 1,041 | 198 | 739 | 1,170 | 392 | 193 | 56 | 36 | 104 | 359 |
| Did not care to work | 760 | 266 | 448 | 714 | 288 | 141 | 35 | 37 | 76 | 234 |
| Possibly in labor force - temporarily ill | 1,922 | 302 | 1,049 | 1,671 | 653 | 355 | 81 | 64 | 150 | 826 |

Table 7-4. MEDICAL CARE NEEDED, COST OF NEEDED MEDICAL CARE, AND TIME FROM WORK REQUIRED TO OBTAIN NEEDED MEDICAL CARE: VARIOUS CATEGORIES OF CHICAGO'S SKID ROW MEN, 1957-58 (CONTINUED)

| Item | Medical care needed per 100 men | | | | Cost of needed care (dollars per man) | | | | | Time from work (weeks per 100 men) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Days in hospital | Days as out-patient | Follow-up visits | Total doctor-clinic visits | Total cost | Cost of hospitalization | Cost of clinic | Cost of surgery | Cost of drugs | |
| DISABILITY STATUS | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 566 | 211 | 465 | 746 | $ 242 | $ 105 | $ 37 | $ 27 | $ 74 | 211 |
| Too old to work | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Unable to work | 1,080 | 192 | 880 | 1,072 | 460 | 201 | 54 | 64 | 142 | 240 |
| Severely handicapped | 3,563 | 332 | 1,905 | 2,985 | 1,170 | 660 | 143 | 104 | 256 | 1,234 |
| Moderately handicapped | 597 | 345 | 680 | 1,025 | 309 | 110 | 51 | 39 | 110 | 235 |
| Slightly handicapped | 221 | 306 | 344 | 649 | 163 | 40 | 33 | 24 | 67 | 115 |
| Not handicapped | ... | 29 | 17 | 46 | 8 | ... | 3 | ... | 6 | 1 |
| REHABILITATION CLASSIFICATION | | | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 566 | 211 | 465 | 746 | 242 | 105 | 37 | 27 | 74 | 211 |
| No change after medical treatment | 367 | 153 | 341 | 522 | 170 | 68 | 26 | 16 | 60 | 127 |
| Too old to work | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Both before and after: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Unable to work | 825 | 165 | 725 | 890 | 380 | 154 | 45 | 80 | 102 | 150 |
| Severely handicapped | 2,477 | 344 | 1,632 | 2,313 | 892 | 459 | 113 | 74 | 245 | 826 |
| Moderately handicapped | 606 | 345 | 682 | 1,027 | 315 | 112 | 50 | 33 | 119 | 226 |
| Slightly handicapped | 108 | 271 | 291 | 562 | 135 | 20 | 28 | 12 | 76 | 48 |
| Not handicapped | ... | 29 | 17 | 46 | 8 | ... | 3 | ... | 6 | 1 |
| Rehabilitation status improved after medical treatment | 968 | 330 | 716 | 1,201 | 389 | 179 | 59 | 49 | 102 | 382 |
| Rehabilitated to be: | | | | | | | | | | |
| Moderately handicapped | 5,264 | 316 | 2,411 | 4,144 | 1,625 | 975 | 196 | 145 | 294 | 1,839 |
| Slightly handicapped | 586 | 348 | 689 | 1,037 | 303 | 108 | 51 | 42 | 103 | 228 |
| Not handicapped | 341 | 321 | 385 | 707 | 193 | 62 | 36 | 34 | 62 | 186 |

The total cost of such a program, if carried out for all categories of men, adds to 3.0 million dollars. This is a staggering figure. On the one hand, it measures how much it would cost the taxpayer to treat the health situation of these men; on the other hand, it measures just how much in need of help these men are. From some viewpoints the cost is reasonable and modest in size. It would be about two months' pay for each of the 4,050 men whose rehabilitation status would be improved by such a program. One man kept on general public assistance for one year costs the city and state about $1,000. This amount could rehabilitate 3 moderately handicapped men to a point where they would be only slightly handicapped, or it could rehabilitate 5 slightly handicapped men to a point where they would not be handicapped at all. Rehabilitation now would keep many of these men off general public assistance a few years from now.

It must be emphasized that a program of medical rehabilitation would have to be much more than a first-aid station set up along Skid Row to take care of emergency wounds and to administer antibiotics — although there is a genuine need for that kind of medical help, too. Skid Row men need medical treatment for hernias, ulcers and other chronic digestive ailments, for high blood pressure, prostate trouble, and other treatments to diminish the disabling effects of other chronic ailments. The medical program would require regular hospital laboratory and treatment facilities with a staff of specialists and expert diagnosticians.

It must be re-emphasized that this program includes no treatment for alcoholism. Neither does it contain any provision for badly-needed dental care.

## III. SUMMARY

Residents of Skid Row are disabled from illness to a far greater extent than the general male population of the same ages. This excessive illness is not due to acute and infectious diseases so much as to chronic ailments (although it is suspected that the prevalence of acute diseases is considerably greater than reported in the survey). A high percentage of the men suffer from severe and multiple chronic disorders, and, as a consequence, they are partially disabled or handicapped for employment. A substantial number of these people are teetotalers or only light drinkers; they seem to live on Skid Row because they are poor, and they seem to be poor, in part, because they are chronically ill. Among the heavy drinkers, alcoholism is complicated by chronic sickness in a substantial proportion of cases; rehabilitation of such men would require a double-barreled approach of medical care and

treatment for alcoholism. However, a substantial number of the problem drinkers are only slightly handicapped or are not handicapped at all, and a very impressive number of the rehabilitable men are not uncontrolled drinkers.

A high percentage of the men on Skid Row are in need of medical care which they cannot afford. The disorders from which they suffer could be greatly relieved and rendered much less disabling by appropriate medical treatment. If, as a part of a Skid Row rehabilitation and renewal program, there were a program of medical rehabilitation, it could greatly reduce the amount of physical disability and greatly increase the employability of the men. For certain categories of men who are not chronic alcoholics, a great deal of rehabilitation could be accomplished at moderate cost.

## Chapter 8

# DEATH ON SKID ROW

In order to study mortality among the homeless men of Skid Row in comparison with the population at large, the death records of the city of Chicago for the three years 1955-57 were analyzed.[1] A listing of names and addresses of cubicle-type hotels was submitted to the Chief Statistician for the city of Chicago. He searched the death records for the three years and isolated all instances of death which occurred to persons whose residence at the time of death was at one of these hotels. These death records were then tabulated to show age, color, and other characteristics for the decedents. Using information from the sample interviews, an estimate was prepared of the average number of men living at this identical set of addresses during the three-year period. Death rates were computed by dividing the deaths by the estimated resident population.

The group of Skid Row men living in cubicle-type hotels has a death rate that is almost unbelievably high. Death rates as calculated for Skid Row have never existed among the general population at any time in the nation's history. They are even higher than the death rates of India, Africa, and other places where the level of medical care is very low.

A first measure of the very great toll that death takes on Skid Row is given by the general death rate. In 1956, the general death rate among white males in the United States was 10.8 deaths per 1,000 residents; among white males living in cubicle-type hotels in Chicago in 1957, it was 70.0, or more than 6 1/2 times as large. A part of this difference could result from differences in age composition, however. A more exact way of making the comparison is to construct a life table for the Skid Row population and to compare the life expectancy at each age with the similar value for U.S. white males. Table 8-1 is such a life table computed for the Skid Row population, using the mortality data obtained from the special tabulations. Column 6 of this table reports the average years of life remaining to a resident of Skid Row. Table 8-2 reports the average years of life remaining to the average U.S. white male, and column 3 of this table shows what percentage the life expect-

Table 8-1. ABRIDGED LIFE TABLE FOR WHITE MALES LIVING IN CUBICLE-TYPE HOTELS IN CHICAGO, 1955-57

| Age interval | Proportion dying | Of 100,000 born alive | | Stationary population | Average remaining lifetime |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Period of life between two exact ages stated in years | Proportion of persons alive at beginning of age interval dying during interval | Number living at beginning of age interval | Number dying during age interval | In the age interval | Average number of years of life remaining at beginning of age interval |
| x to x + 5 | $_5q_x$ | $_1l_x$ | $_5d_x$ | $_5L_x$ | $\mathring{e}_x$ |
| 20-24..... | .036857 | 100,000 | 3,686 | 491,467 | 32.09 |
| 25-29..... | .041676 | 96,314 | 4,014 | 472,235 | 28.22 |
| 30-34..... | .048866 | 92,300 | 4,510 | 451,000 | 24.33 |
| 35-39..... | .062619 | 87,790 | 5,497 | 426,124 | 20.44 |
| 40-44..... | .098253 | 82,293 | 8,086 | 392,524 | 16.63 |
| 45-49..... | .186721 | 74,207 | 13,856 | 337,951 | 13.15 |
| 50-54..... | .304142 | 60,351 | 18,355 | 256,713 | 10.57 |
| 55-59..... | .333956 | 41,996 | 14,025 | 175,312 | 9.08 |
| 60-64..... | .447585 | 27,971 | 12,519 | 107,922 | 7.37 |
| 65-69..... | .481276 | 15,452 | 7,437 | 58,102 | 6.35 |
| 70-74..... | .575802 | 8,015 | 4,615 | 27,801 | 5.00 |
| 75-79..... | .722443 | 3,400 | 2,456 | 10,049 | 3.60 |

ancy of the Skid Row white male is of the life expectancy of the average U.S. male. The full impact of mortality on the Skid Row population may be summarized by saying that at most ages, Skid Row inhabitants can expect to live less than one-half the number of years remaining to men of the same age in the general population. For example, the average U.S. white male, ages 50-54, may look forward to 23 additional years of life, but on Skid Row a typical resident in this age group may expect to live only 10.6 years longer, or only 46 percent as much longer. Similar differences are present for all ages, with the differential becoming steadily more unfavorable with increasing age for the survival of residents of cubicle-type hotels. For purposes of comparison, the life expectancy at selected ages is shown for India and the male African population of the Belgian Congo. In every case, the death rates of Skid Row compare unfavorably with the death rates of these underdeveloped countries.

This finding is made more impressive by the fact that the death statistics on which the above findings are based are almost certain to be severely incomplete. Deaths were included in the tabulations only when the decedent could be definitely located at a specific address. Skid Row men without a permanent place to stay, who died out-of-doors, or who were found wandering the streets in a condition of serious illness and rushed to a hospital where they died, would not be included in these tabulations. One can only speculate on how much higher the true Skid Row death rate is.

Table 8-2. LIFE EXPECTANCY OF WHITE MALES LIVING IN SKID ROW CUBICLE-TYPE HOTELS IN COMPARISON WITH WHITE MALES IN THE U.S. GENERAL POPULATION AND MALES OF SELECTED "UNDERDEVELOPED" COUNTRIES

| Age | Years of life remaining | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | White males, U.S., 1956 | White males, Skid Row, 1956-57 | Skid Row as percent of U.S. | Males, India, 1941-50 | Males, Belgian Congo African population 1950-52 |
| 20-24 years..... | 50.1 | 32.1 | 64 | 31.4 | 32.8 |
| 25-29 years..... | 45.5 | 28.2 | 62 | 28.2 | 29.5 |
| 30-34 years..... | 40.9 | 24.3 | 60 | 25.0 | 26.1 |
| 35-39 years..... | 36.2 | 20.4 | 57 | 22.0 | 23.0 |
| 40-44 years..... | 31.6 | 16.6 | 53 | 19.1 | 20.0 |
| 45-49 years..... | 27.3 | 13.2 | 48 | 16.3 | 17.0 |
| 50-54 years..... | 23.1 | 10.6 | 46 | 13.6 | 14.3 |
| 55-59 years..... | 19.3 | 9.1 | 47 | 11.3 | 11.8 |
| 60-64 years..... | 15.9 | 7.4 | 46 | 9.2 | 9.6 |
| 65-69 years..... | 12.9 | 6.4 | 49 | 7.3 | 7.5 |
| 70-74 years..... | 10.3 | 5.0 | 48 | 5.8 | 5.6 |
| 75-79 years..... | 7.9 | 3.6 | 46 | 4.6 | 4.0 |

Source of comparative data: National Office of Vital Statistics, Vital Statistics of the United States, 1956, page xcii. United Nations, Demographic Yearbook, 1956, pages 734-5 and 738-9.

Circumstances of Death. — It could be conservatively estimated that about one-half of the Skid Row deaths occur without benefit of medical attention immediately preceding the terminal illness. This is indicated by at least two facts. First, only 39 percent of the 1,012 death certificates allocated to the cubicle-type hotels in the years 1955-57 were signed by an attending physician; the remainder were certificates issued through the Coroner's office. Second, almost one-half of all deaths occurred under circumstances that make it appear that medical attention had not been given or had arrived too late. The deaths of the Skid Row men occurred in the following places:

| | Percent |
|---|---|
| Total | 100 |
| Probably with little or no medical care | 52 |
| Died in the cubicle | 42 |
| Died en route to hospital | 5 |
| Place of death unspecified | 5 |
| Probably with some medical care | 48 |
| Died in Cook County Hospital | 39 |
| Died in other hospital or convalescent home | 6 |
| Died in jail | 3 |

From general conversations with long-time workers in the area, the information of the death certificates fits what seem to be the facts: in a high percentage of cases the men who are not on General Public Assistance, or some other pension program that guarantees them minimum medical care, simply are found dead in their cubicles by the maids who clean in the morning, and the bodies are turned over to the police. At the Monroe Street Station, one officer is kept busy almost continuously trying to locate relatives and attending to other matters incidental to deaths of this kind. One of the resource persons interviewed was a police officer who had spent many years in this kind of work. Welfare rules prohibit physician's visits unless the man is a regular welfare client. A private physician would knowingly be performing an act of charity if he responded to a call from such an address. Often, the hotel manager himself calls the doctor for a man who has been a long-time customer and pays for the doctor's visit. Sometimes a man's friends will chip in to get enough money for a doctor. Interviews with hotel managers revealed some rather heartbreaking stories of unsuccessful efforts to get a physician to visit residents. However, if the man is unknown in that hotel, there is almost nothing he can do to get medical aid. Alone, out of contact with his family, without enough money, and in a situation where death is an almost weekly annoyance to the hotel manager (because it means calling the police), the down-and-out stranger is helpless. There is no law that requires anyone to give him emergency aid, and there is no systematic program of private charity to help him. All too often the death is needless. For example, a single shot of antibiotics might give a sick man a fighting chance against pneumonia. It is difficult for a dying stranger to excite much attention on Skid Row; death symptoms and sounds are easily mistaken for common drunkenness.

Cause of Death. — Because of the circumstances surrounding their deaths (lack of prior medical attention), the cause of death frequently is unknown or only vaguely defined. Unless an autopsy is performed (and in most cases an autopsy is not performed upon homeless men found dead), the cause of death cannot be stated exactly; the coroner (or his representative) makes the best possible guess from external evidence. Table 8-3 presents a set of death rates for each of the major causes of death among Skid Row men.[2] A corresponding death rate among males in the general population is provided for purposes of comparison. From this evidence it may be seen how much higher the mortality of homeless men is than that of the general population, for the following causes of death:

| Cause of death | Ratio of Skid Row rate to national rate for males |
|---|---|
| Heart disease, type not specified | 233.0 times as large |
| Tuberculosis | 36.9 " " " |
| Alcoholism and alcoholic psychosis | 16.0 " " " |
| Accidents from falls | 14.7 " " " |
| Pneumonia | 14.2 " " " |
| Cirrhosis of the liver | 11.0 " " " |
| Other diseases of respiratory system | 9.4 " " " |
| Suicide | 5.1 " " " |

It has been demonstrated in other studies that the Skid Row area is an important incubator of tuberculosis infection.[3] This has an immediate effect upon the general population because Skid Row workers come into direct contact with them in a variety of ways. The most common way is through restaurants, where Skid Row men are often hired temporarily to meet overflow crowds on week-ends, during conventions, etc. If one applies any one of the factors used by public health

Table 8-3. DEATH RATES PER 100,000, BY CAUSE OF DEATH, FOR MALES IN THE U.S. GENERAL POPULATION, 1956, AND FOR MEN LIVING IN CUBICLE-TYPE HOTELS IN CHICAGO, 1955-57

| Cause of death | Skid Row males | U. S. males | Ratio of Skid Row rate to U. S. rate |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 6,359.9 | 1,083.0 | 5.9 |
| Tuberculosis | 446.7 | 12.1 | 36.9 |
| Syphilis | 6.7 | 3.4 | 2.0 |
| Cancer | 490.0 | 158.5 | 3.1 |
| Diabetes | 20.0 | 12.5 | 1.6 |
| Alcoholism or alcoholic psychosis | 36.7 | 2.3 | 16.0 |
| Vascular lesions affecting central nervous system | 320.0 | 103.8 | 3.1 |
| Diseases of the heart | | 429.9 | |
| Arteriosclerotic heart disease so described | 690.0 | 113.4 | 6.1 |
| Heart disease specified as involving coronary arteries | 1,050.0 | 212.8 | 4.9 |
| Other specified heart disease | 250.0 | 106.0 | 2.4 |
| Other unspecified heart disease | 1,796.6 | 7.7 | 233.3 |
| Pneumonia | 440.0 | 30.9 | 14.2 |
| Other diseases of respiratory system | 36.7 | 3.9 | 9.4 |
| Diseases of digestive system | 63.3 | 21.1 | 3.0 |
| Cirrhosis of liver | 156.7 | 14.2 | 11.0 |
| Diseases of genito-urinary system | 63.3 | 24.6 | 2.6 |
| Accidents-motor vehicle and railway | 86.7 | 37.6 | 2.3 |
| Accidental falls | 176.7 | 12.0 | 14.7 |
| Other accidents | 76.7 | 30.2 | 2.5 |
| Suicide | 80.0 | 15.8 | 5.1 |
| Homicide | 30.0 | 9.6 | 2.2 |
| Other causes, specified | 43.1 | 150.6 | 0.3 |

persons that measures the prevalence of tuberculosis as a ratio of the tuberculosis death rate, one cannot avoid concluding that a large percentage of the Skid Row population is tubercular. The cubicle hotel, with a minimum of sunlight, ventilation, and cleanliness, provides a good environment for the culture of tuberculosis bacilli.

Pneumonia among homeless men is a by-product of long-continued exposure to the elements, poor diet, inadequate clothing, or excessive drinking. In the winter, almost everyone on Skid Row has a cold. The sidewalks are strewn with sputum, and infection is hard to check in cubicle hotels where the air is shared by all.

The automobile accidents occur to homeless men as pedestrians — they are struck by passing cars. Many of the accidental deaths from "falls" are in fact murders by jackrollers, partly the result of fighting while drinking and partly a self-inflicted by-product of drinking. Many men experience severe depression and evidence suicidal tendencies after periods of heavy drinking, and the discouragement of Skid Row life encourages the tendency toward suicide.

Season of Death. — There is a definite seasonality to death, even among the general population; a disproportionately large share of all deaths occurs during the winter months. For Skid Row homeless men, the winter months are unusually severe. The following summary shows the situation:

| | Percent of deaths | |
|---|---|---|
| | Skid Row | U.S. males |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Winter | 30.5 | 26.2 |
| Spring | 25.0 | 25.7 |
| Summer | 18.2 | 23.9 |
| Autumn | 26.3 | 24.2 |

## SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The death rate among homeless men in Chicago is 70 per thousand, which is 6 1/2 times the national average. Death rates of this magnitude are found only in a few of the most backward and poverty-stricken nations of the world. The exact reasons for this must be guessed at cautiously:

a. There probably is a selective process, whereby men without families whose health is failing and who have no money or persons to care for them move here to die.

b. Men who have lived in poverty and without medical care for many years would be expected to have high mortality rates.
c. Prolonged heavy drinking undoubtedly causes the life span to be drastically reduced — many men on Skid Row literally drink themselves to death.
d. Life in the cubicle-type hotels may be conducive to the spread of infectious diseases, and especially to pulmonary disorders.
e. Medical help is unavailable to many of the homeless men when severe illness strikes.
f. Homeless men may be far more negligent in caring for their health than most other men; they may eat poorer food, get less rest, work when ill, etc.

Whatever the factors may be, the situation produced is probably worse than in any other segment of the population. Skid Row appears to be one of the last domains of avoidable and unnecessary death. It is a huge incubator of infection for the city, breeding all diseases that thrive on malnourished, run-down bodies living in an unsanitary environment with inadequate medical care.

## FOOTNOTES

[1]This section of the report is based upon data obtained from special tabulations of death records. The generosity of the Chicago Board of Health and the hard work (piled atop regular operations) of Frank Bower, Chief Statistician, and Marvin Templeton, Assistant Chief Statistician, who prepared these tabulations, are gratefully acknowledged.

[2]Table 8-3 refers to both white and nonwhite populations, whereas Tables 8-1 and 8-2 referred to white population only.

[3]Tuberculosis patients who have a drinking problem often refuse to remain in the sanitorium long enough to complete their cure. They tend to leave as soon as the primary symptoms disappear.

*Chapter 9*

# *MIGRATION AND SPATIAL MOBILITY OF HOMELESS MEN*

Sometimes the citizens of Chicago and Illinois commiserate themselves because they dislike footing the bill for a Skid Row they believe to be a focal point to which the social misfits of the entire Midwest and much of the South drift for a handout. According to this belief, Skid Row is largely a product of in-migration from other areas; they view Chicago as an unwilling host to the outcasts of other communities. Some say that the city dare not launch a "soft" program of welfare for these men, and that the police on Skid Row cannot stop being "tough" because it would attract hordes of freeloaders from throughout the country. To many, the residents of Skid Row seem to be nomadic vagabonds who freely drift in response to the availability of charity in various places. Evidently, knowledge of the migration history of the homeless men is an important ingredient in understanding Skid Row or planning for its elimination. The purpose of this chapter is to provide this knowledge. The major findings will be that although more than three-fourths have been migrants at some time, homeless men are not very migratory once they arrive on Skid Row; only a minor fraction are nomadic; and Chicago itself is the major producer of personalities that end up on its Skid Rows.

Region of Origin (Table 9-1). — Below is a summary classification of Chicago's homeless men according to their place of birth and the places where they lived while growing up (from 6 to 14 years of age), and roughly similar statistics for the residents of Illinois and Chicago. Unfortunately, there are no adequate data with which to compare the mobility statistics for Skid Row. In 1940, the Bureau of Census tabulated Chicago's population according to place of birth, but these data are deficient in two ways. They are now out of date, and they include children and others under 20 years of age (a group that is comparatively immobile). The data for 1950 are available by age and therefore provide statistics for adults separately, but are tabulated for the state of Illinois and not for the city of Chicago; as a result, they include the large and comparatively stationary population of farms and smaller towns in the state. The place of origin of Skid Row residents, in comparison with the population of Illinois and Chicago, is as follows:

| State or region | Percent of all homeless men: Born in this place | Percent of all homeless men: Lived here as a boy | State of birth statistics U. S. Census: Illinois, population 20 years and over, 1950 | State of birth statistics U. S. Census: Chicago, total population, 1940 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Illinois | 24 | 25 | 59 | 58 |
| North Central, Other | 23 | 25 | 13 | 11 |
| South | 25 | 23 | 9 | 7 |
| Northeast and West | 13 | 12 | 6 | 4 |
| Foreign born | 15 | 15 | 13 | 20 |

All of these sets of statistics are deficient because they specify state of birth rather than community of birth.

Table 9-1. PLACE OF BIRTH OF CHICAGO'S HOMELESS MEN, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION

| Place of birth by type of residence | All homeless men | Drinking classification: Teetotaler | Light | Moderate | Heavy | Derelict |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| PLACE OF BIRTH | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| In a foreign country | 15.1 | 23.6 | 21.1 | 13.4 | 8.3 | 3.8 |
| In a metropolitan area | 45.9 | 42.9 | 44.2 | 43.8 | 44.9 | 59.9 |
| Northeastern States | 7.2 | 6.9 | 7.1 | 7.8 | 5.1 | 10.2 |
| North Central States (exc. Illinois) | 9.5 | 5.9 | 10.8 | 7.5 | 10.2 | 13.4 |
| Illinois | 19.8 | 20.7 | 19.7 | 19.6 | 20.1 | 18.5 |
| Southern States | 8.4 | 7.9 | 5.0 | 8.8 | 7.5 | 17.8 |
| Western States | 1.1 | 1.5 | 1.6 | ... | 2.0 | ... |
| In a nonmetropolitan area | 38.1 | 33.5 | 34.7 | 38.9 | 46.8 | 36.3 |
| Northeastern States | 2.8 | 3.0 | 3.2 | 2.6 | 3.1 | 1.3 |
| North Central States (exc. Illinois) | 13.1 | 14.3 | 11.1 | 15.4 | 15.4 | 8.3 |
| Illinois | 3.8 | 3.0 | 1.6 | 4.9 | 5.1 | 5.7 |
| Southern States | 16.2 | 11.8 | 15.0 | 15.0 | 21.3 | 19.1 |
| Western States | 2.2 | 1.5 | 3.9 | 1.0 | 2.0 | 1.9 |
| No information | 0.9 | ... | ... | 3.9 | ... | ... |

Making allowance for deficiencies, a reliable guess would be that roughly 45-50 percent of Chicago's population in 1958 were born in Illinois and that about 35-40 percent were born inside the city limits of Chicago. If this is correct, then the percentage of persons born out of the state is nearly twice as high for the Skid Row population as for the Chicago population, for roughly three-fourths of Skid Row men were born in other states.

Because Chicago has grown rapidly over the past half-century, with the central city being the chief port of entry and with natives moving to the suburbs, it is only to be expected that a large part of the entire population should have been born elsewhere. Moreover, within the city some neighborhoods are more specialized than others in functioning as the first home for newcomers. Such neighborhoods may contain only a few persons who could claim to have been born in Chicago. The large areas currently receiving Negro in-migrants from the South or those receiving low-income white population from the South probably have percentages of persons born in other states that are as high as these found for Skid Row. However, Skid Row definitely is one of those neighborhoods in the city to which new migrants come.

The above table shows that the South contributes an unusually large share of Skid Row residents, especially in view of the fact that most are white, whereas the state-of-birth data include the large contingents of Negro in-migrants. Thus, the popular impression that in recent years Skid Row has been invaded by Southern "hillbillies" is definitely supported by the statistics; 1 homeless man in 4 was born or reared in the South. This is more than twice the proportion of all Southerners among the Chicago population.

But it would be very easy to exaggerate the migratory aspect of Skid Row as one of its unique features. More than one-fifth of the homeless men appear to have been born inside the city limits or to have grown up in Chicago. Moreover, it is unjustified to assume that incoming migrants go directly to Skid Row; they may arrive and live for several months or even many years in another part of the city as "normal" residents until circumstances force them onto Skid Row. Apparently, many pensioners as well as heavy drinkers come to Skid Row by this sequence. Under these circumstances, the arrival on Skid Row may be due more to Chicago's influence than to the effect of the hometown. Some of the migrants who come immediately to Skid Row may later move on to other parts of the city. Finally, no data are available about the number of Chicagoans who live on Skid Rows in other cities. Public officials in Minneapolis, Detroit, and other cities complain that they have a lot of Chicago Skid Row men.

Adding to the Skid Row men born here the men who move to Chicago and are forced to move to Skid Row from a "normal" neighborhood, it must be concluded that Chicago almost certainly generates at least one-half of its own Skid Row, and probably more. If Chicago exports as many men to other Skid Rows as it receives on its own from outside, it is breaking even. Chicago probably gains somewhat in this exchange; in this sense it does function as a regional collecting spot, but only to the extent of about 15-25 percent of its number and not 100 percent as implied in the complaints cited in the opening paragraph of this chapter.

Metropolitan-Nonmetropolitan and Farm-Nonfarm Origin (Table 9-2). — Another theory of Skid Row that falls apart under the glare of data is the notion that Skid Row is comprised largely of farm boys who come to the city to make good, but get disorganized instead. A majority of native Americans on Skid Row were born in a metropolitan area and grew up there. Only about 16 percent of the homeless men claimed to have a farm background. This is a much smaller proportion than is found among the general adult population of Chicago. The reverse hypothesis therefore seems justified — farm boys are underrepresented on Skid Row. The homeless man is very largely a product of big-city living. The boys from the small town and the medium-sized city also seem to end up on Skid Row at a greater rate than the farmer's sons. This is true of the older generation of men on Skid Row as well as of

Table 9-2. TYPE OF COMMUNITY AND REGION IN WHICH HOMELESS MEN LIVED WHILE GROWING UP (6-16 YEARS OF AGE)

| Residence by age | All homeless men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Teetotaler | Light | Moderate | Heavy | Derelict |
| WHERE LIVED WHILE GROWING UP | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Less than 45 years of age.... | 32.5 | 20.1 | 23.0 | 34.2 | 47.2 | 42.1 |
| Metropolitan and nonmetropolitan nonfarm..... | 26.5 | 20.1 | 16.8 | 26.8 | 39.6 | 34.7 |
| Northeastern States..... | 3.2 | 3.9 | 1.2 | 4.3 | 4.1 | 3.2 |
| North Central States (exc. Illinois)..... | 7.6 | 6.7 | 6.4 | 7.9 | 11.1 | 5.1 |
| Illinois..... | 7.0 | 2.4 | 4.9 | 10.8 | 10.3 | 4.6 |
| Southern States..... | 7.4 | 7.1 | 2.7 | 3.8 | 11.4 | 19.0 |
| Western States..... | 1.3 | ... | 1.6 | ... | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| Nonmetropolitan - farm..... | 6.0 | ... | 6.2 | 7.4 | 7.6 | 7.4 |
| Northeastern States..... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| North Central States (exc. Illinois)..... | 1.7 | ... | 1.6 | 2.6 | 1.5 | 2.8 |
| Illinois..... | 0.3 | ... | 0.6 | ... | 0.9 | ... |
| Southern States..... | 3.6 | ... | 3.3 | 4.1 | 5.3 | 4.6 |
| Western States..... | 0.4 | ... | 0.6 | 0.7 | ... | ... |
| Forty-five years of age and older..... | 51.2 | 57.5 | 56.3 | 46.2 | 45.7 | 50.5 |
| Metropolitan and nonmetropolitan nonfarm..... | 43.5 | 50.8 | 43.7 | 40.0 | 41.1 | 44.9 |
| Northeastern States..... | 5.1 | 4.7 | 5.5 | 6.2 | 2.9 | 5.6 |
| North Central States (exc. Illinois)..... | 12.7 | 15.0 | 14.4 | 7.7 | 14.7 | 13.0 |
| Illinois..... | 16.6 | 18.5 | 17.0 | 18.2 | 14.4 | 13.9 |
| Southern States..... | 8.0 | 11.4 | 6.2 | 7.2 | 7.0 | 11.1 |
| Western States..... | 1.1 | 1.2 | 0.6 | 0.7 | 2.1 | 1.4 |
| Nonmetropolitan - farm..... | 7.7 | 6.7 | 12.6 | 6.2 | 4.7 | 5.6 |
| Northeastern States..... | 0.6 | ... | 1.6 | 0.7 | ... | ... |
| North Central States (exc. Illinois..... | 2.5 | 3.5 | 3.1 | 1.4 | 2.1 | 2.8 |
| Illinois..... | 0.5 | ... | 0.6 | 1.4 | ... | ... |
| Southern States..... | 3.5 | 0.8 | 6.6 | 2.6 | 2.6 | 2.8 |
| Western States..... | 0.5 | 2.4 | 0.6 | ... | ... | ... |
| Foreign born..... | 14.6 | 22.4 | 20.7 | 13.9 | 6.2 | 6.5 |
| No information on residence.. | 1.7 | ... | ... | 5.7 | 0.9 | 0.9 |

the younger one, as may be inferred from the second section of Table 9-2.

The same general picture of region of origin is true also for drinking status of heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts. More than one-fifth of the uncontrolled drinkers were born or reared in Chicago, and about one-fourth are lifetime citizens of Illinois. An above-average share of them were born and reared in metropolitan areas. The only outstanding differences with respect to origin are that migrants from the South tend to be heavy drinkers or derelicts, while an unusually large share of the foreign-born residents tend to be teetotalers or light drinkers.

The following summary of the type-of-community origins of the men brings out clearly the fallacy of the theory that homeless men (and especially those who become alcoholic) drift into Chicago primarily from farms and small towns:

| Type of community in which the man grew up | All homeless men | Heavy drinkers, alcoholic derelicts |
|---|---|---|
| Total . . . . . | 100 | 100 |
| Metropolitan area . . . . . | 49 | 56 |
| Nonmetropolitan cities and villages . . . . | 21 | 24 |
| Nonmetropolitan farms . . . . . | 14 | 13 |
| Foreign-born, no information . . . . . | 16 | 7 |

Mobility in Youth (Table 9-3). — It might be theorized that another factor contributing to the men's arrival on Skid Row was a high mobility of their parents. Frequent moving might prevent the children from developing social roots and learning normal community life. Data collected to test this hypothesis reject it vigorously. Few of the Skid Row men moved as growing boys, and of those who did move, all but a small fraction moved only once. While it is true that men who did move excessively have a much higher rate of alcoholism, only 4-6 percent of the alcoholics are involved; the mobility of the parents probably was a result of other factors such as family dissolution or drinking.

Adult Mobility. — There is very little evidence to support the belief that Skid Row residents today are highly mobile or restless to be on the move although it seems to have been true a quarter-century ago. Instead, it appears that once a man arrives on Skid Row he tends to remain there until he is rescued, rehabilitates himself, or dies. In his book, The Hobo, Nels Anderson portrays Chicago's Skid Row as a community of transients who roamed the country as casual workers or sturdy beggars and who returned to Chicago to spend the winters or to have a spree of drinking and loafing between excursions. In this con-

text, the Skid Row was regarded as a regional labor pool from which employers drew workers to meet seasonal or cyclical peaks in labor

Table 9-3. NUMBER OF MOVES MADE BY HOMELESS MEN WHILE THEY WERE CHILDREN (6-14 YEARS OF AGE), BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION

| Moves by type of residence as a boy | All homeless men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Teetotaler | Light | Moderate | Heavy | Derelict |
| NUMBER OF MOVES AS A BOY | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Grew up in a metropolitan area | 48.8 | 46.8 | 43.9 | 48.3 | 53.1 | 56.0 |
| No moves | 41.4 | 44.1 | 36.6 | 40.0 | 45.2 | 46.3 |
| One move | 4.9 | 2.8 | 4.9 | 5.0 | 5.9 | 5.6 |
| 2-3 moves | 1.9 | ... | 1.8 | 2.6 | 2.1 | 2.8 |
| 4 or more moves | 0.2 | ... | ... | 0.7 | ... | ... |
| No information (moves) | 0.3 | ... | 0.6 | ... | ... | 1.4 |
| Grew up in a nonmetropolitan-nonfarm area | 21.2 | 24.0 | 16.6 | 18.4 | 27.6 | 23.6 |
| No moves | 16.1 | 18.1 | 13.8 | 14.4 | 20.5 | 15.7 |
| One move | 3.6 | 4.7 | 2.3 | 3.3 | 5.3 | 2.8 |
| 2-3 moves | 0.8 | 1.2 | ... | 0.7 | 0.9 | 2.3 |
| 4 or more moves | 0.5 | ... | 0.6 | ... | 0.9 | 1.4 |
| No information (moves) | 0.2 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1.4 |
| Grew up in a nonmetropolitan-farm area | 13.7 | 6.7 | 18.7 | 13.6 | 12.3 | 13.0 |
| No moves | 10.8 | 6.7 | 14.4 | 10.3 | 9.7 | 10.2 |
| One move | 2.4 | ... | 3.1 | 3.3 | 2.1 | 2.8 |
| 2-3 moves | 0.5 | ... | 1.2 | ... | 0.6 | ... |
| 4 or more moves | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| No information (moves) | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| No information as to type of residence | 1.7 | ... | ... | 5.7 | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Foreign born | 14.6 | 22.4 | 20.7 | 13.9 | 6.2 | 6.5 |

needs. Undoubtedly this function was served a generation ago. Large railroads and highways, harvesting farm crops, working in lumber camps, herding cattle and sheep, working on steamships, and doing unskilled labor on large rural construction projects such as dams or transcontinental telegraph and telephone lines. The Skid Rows of Chicago, Minneapolis, New York, Seattle, and other major cities were reservoirs of manpower. The nation did have a large bachelor labor force in those days, and Skid Row and the adjoining rooming-house areas were places of residence for men waiting to be hired or resting between jobs. But this is no longer true. Table 9-4-A shows that more than one-half of the men on Skid Row either were born in Chicago and have always lived there or else moved to Chicago and stayed. Only about 11 percent of the men could be called nomadic, having departed and returned as many as ten times during adult life. Certainly, nomadism or semi-nomadism is not uncommon on Skid Row, but it must be acknowledged that at the present time the flow of wanderers is only a trickle in comparison with the large nonmobile "home guard."

The high mobility of earlier years seems to have been encouraged by a variety of factors:

a. A low level of mechanization in many lines of rural industry
b. Trucks and freight trains providing convenient free transportation for crossing the country
c. A surplus of males in the adult population resulting from heavy immigration from abroad
d. A nonunionized labor supply of unskilled workingmen

All of these factors now are changed. Mechanization now exists in all types of rural industry. Punitive laws and the effective cooperation of local, state, and private police result in the prevention of hitchhiking on public and private carriers. The bachelors of marriageable age now are fewer in number than women, at ages above 30. Unionization of even the most unskilled jobs, placing a premium on seniority and stability, raises barriers against the intrusion of wandering workingmen. The prospects are good that Skid Row will become even less mobile in future years.

Today wandering is much more common among heavy drinkers and chronic alcoholics than among the controlled drinkers. At least one-fifth of the alcoholics could definitely be classed as highly mobile. Much of this mobility is linked to railroad work; this was discussed in previous chapters. Apparently, railroad work does not account for all the mobility among alcoholics; one could speculate that much is police- and court-inspired. It is said to be customary for police to escort unwelcome citizens to the edge of town and for judges to give a suspended sentence to a chronic offender on condition that he leave the community. These practices are supposed to be especially common in smaller towns and cities. If such is the case the effect would be to herd homeless men in the direction of big-city Skid Rows and of keeping some of them drifting from one Skid Row to another.

Current Mobility. — The low-mobility aspect of Skid Row is further revealed in Table 9-4-B. During the twelve months preceding the interview, 71 percent of the men had stayed in Chicago continuously, while 29 percent were in-migrants at some time during the year. Only 10 percent had moved more than twice. About 16 percent of the men had shipped out for temporary railway maintenance jobs and then had returned, and an additional 10-20 percent of the men may well have been fresh in-migrants coming to seek permanent jobs in the city. It becomes clear that the typical present-day homeless man is a comparatively fixed resident; the small group of gandy dancers give the illusion of nomadism. Since 5-10 percent of Skid Row residents die each year and a substantial number make good and move away, it would be

quite possible to have an annual in-migration rate of 30 percent with very little nomadism. Undoubtedly, the wanderers and floaters of today's general population also continue to make use of Skid Rows, but they form only a minor segment of the Skid Row population. So immobile is the population that the police, the hotel clerks, the bartenders, the mission workers, and other administrative persons know almost everybody on "the street," and a stranger is promptly recognized.

Long-time observers of Skid Row are aware of this transition from high mobility to low mobility. For example, one hotel manager identi-

Table 9-4. MOBILITY HISTORY OF THE HOMELESS MEN, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION

| Mobility | All homeless men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Teetotaler | Light | Moderate | Heavy | Derelict |
| A. NUMBER OF TRIPS TO CHICAGO.... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Born in Chicago, lived here continuously..... | 7.5 | 4.6 | 9.4 | 7.3 | 9.5 | 3.5 |
| 1 time (including persons born, moved, returned)..... | 44.6 | 51.0 | 55.1 | 46.9 | 31.8 | 25.4 |
| 2 times..... | 14.0 | 9.3 | 13.1 | 12.0 | 19.4 | 17.6 |
| 3 times..... | 8.3 | 10.3 | 5.6 | 8.7 | 10.7 | 7.7 |
| 4-5 times..... | 6.7 | 5.2 | 2.9 | 5.8 | 10.7 | 13.4 |
| 6-10 times..... | 7.7 | 10.8 | 5.1 | 8.7 | 6.2 | 11.3 |
| 11-20 times..... | 5.9 | 5.7 | 3.2 | 7.3 | 4.1 | 14.1 |
| 21-29 times..... | 1.9 | 1.5 | 1.6 | 1.1 | 3.7 | 1.4 |
| 30 or more times..... | 3.3 | 1.5 | 4.0 | 2.2 | 3.7 | 5.6 |
| B. NUMBER OF MOVES DURING PAST YEAR..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| No moves - in Chicago continuously..... | 71.2 | 81.0 | 82.5 | 72.2 | 57.3 | 51.0 |
| 1 move..... | 12.0 | 8.5 | 9.8 | 13.1 | 15.3 | 14.6 |
| 2 moves..... | 8.3 | 5.5 | 2.9 | 8.2 | 12.1 | 19.9 |
| 3 moves..... | 3.4 | 3.5 | 1.3 | 4.9 | 3.2 | 6.0 |
| 4-5 moves..... | 2.1 | ... | 1.6 | 1.6 | 3.2 | 5.3 |
| 6-9 moves..... | 2.1 | 1.5 | 0.5 | ... | 6.9 | 3.3 |
| 10 or more moves..... | 0.8 | ... | 1.3 | ... | 2.0 | ... |
| C. MONTHS IN CHICAGO LAST YEAR... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Less than 1..... | 2.9 | 1.5 | 3.2 | 2.0 | 6.7 | ... |
| 1-3 months..... | 4.5 | 5.4 | 2.1 | 2.9 | 6.7 | 9.1 |
| 3-5 months..... | 3.9 | ... | 3.7 | 4.9 | 7.5 | 1.9 |
| 5-7 months..... | 6.0 | 3.9 | 0.5 | 5.9 | 13.0 | 11.0 |
| 7-9 months..... | 5.0 | 3.4 | 5.0 | 3.6 | 3.9 | 11.7 |
| 9-11 months..... | 4.7 | 5.9 | 2.4 | 3.6 | 4.7 | 11.0 |
| 11-12 months..... | 72.9 | 79.8 | 83.2 | 77.1 | 57.5 | 55.2 |
| D. GEOGRAPHIC DIVISIONS VISITED BY MIGRANTS *..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| New England..... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Middle Atlantic..... | 9.3 | 13.2 | 4.7 | 10.6 | 8.5 | 10.8 |
| East North Central..... | 59.7 | 65.8 | 56.3 | 57.6 | 51.9 | 73.0 |
| West North Central..... | 24.8 | 13.2 | 21.9 | 40.0 | 30.2 | 8.1 |
| South Atlantic..... | 9.3 | 5.3 | 4.7 | 9.4 | 15.1 | 6.8 |
| East South Central..... | 7.6 | ... | 15.6 | ... | 15.1 | 2.7 |
| West South Central..... | 8.4 | 7.9 | 7.8 | 9.4 | 14.2 | ... |
| Mountain..... | 8.4 | 15.8 | 10.9 | 3.5 | 8.5 | 8.1 |
| Pacific..... | 11.2 | 15.8 | 7.8 | 8.2 | 18.9 | 4.1 |

*Percentages add to more than 100 percent because many of the migrants visited more than one geographic division.

Table 9-4. MOBILITY HISTORY OF THE HOMELESS MEN, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION (Continued)

| Mobility | All homeless men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Teetotaler | Light | Moderate | Heavy | Derelict |
| E. RESIDENCE LAST SPRING AND SUMMER | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Chicago City | 80.7 | 86.2 | 87.0 | 84.3 | 68.1 | 72.0 |
| Rest of Illinois | 1.9 | 3.9 | ... | 2.0 | 2.0 | 3.8 |
| Northeast | 1.0 | 1.0 | 0.8 | 1.0 | ... | 3.2 |
| Other North Central | 8.1 | 3.0 | 6.4 | 8.2 | 14.6 | 8.3 |
| South | 2.4 | ... | 2.7 | 2.0 | 4.7 | 1.9 |
| West | 2.2 | 3.0 | 0.8 | 1.0 | 4.3 | 3.8 |
| Out of Chicago, place unknown | 3.6 | 3.0 | 2.4 | 1.6 | 6.3 | 7.0 |
| F. NUMBER OF ADDRESSES OFF SKID ROW (this trip to Chicago) | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| None-(not off Skid Row) | 56.2 | 51.7 | 52.1 | 55.2 | 61.0 | 65.6 |
| 1 address | 22.6 | 25.6 | 21.6 | 21.6 | 21.7 | 24.8 |
| 2 addresses | 9.2 | 9.4 | 13.4 | 9.8 | 5.5 | 3.2 |
| 3 or more addresses | 7.1 | 7.4 | 10.5 | 4.9 | 7.9 | 1.3 |
| No information | 5.0 | 5.9 | 2.4 | 8.5 | 3.9 | 5.1 |
| G. MONTHS ON SKID ROW THIS YEAR | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Less than 1 month | 6.2 | 4.9 | 7.1 | 4.6 | 9.4 | 3.8 |
| 1-3 months | 10.9 | 7.9 | 7.4 | 5.6 | 20.1 | 19.1 |
| 3-5 months | 5.2 | ... | 5.8 | 9.2 | 6.3 | 1.3 |
| 5-7 months | 8.9 | 6.9 | 5.3 | 6.9 | 15.4 | 14.0 |
| 7-9 months | 5.7 | 5.4 | 5.8 | 2.6 | 5.9 | 11.5 |
| 9-11 months | 5.6 | 8.9 | 2.4 | 7.2 | 3.9 | 8.9 |
| 11-12 months | 56.4 | 66.0 | 66.3 | 62.4 | 37.0 | 39.5 |
| No information | 1.0 | ... | ... | 1.6 | 2.0 | 1.9 |

fied two of his regular customers as "real old-time hobos" and wanted them to be interviewed as members of a species that is rapidly becoming extinct.

The heavy drinkers and chronic alcoholics were much more migratory than the teetotalers and light drinkers during the year preceding the interview. About 15 percent of the former group had moved three times during the preceding year, whereas only about 5 percent of the controlled drinkers had moved that many times.

Months of Residence in Chicago during Year Preceding Interview. — Still another measure of the permanency of residence is the reported number of months the man spent in Chicago during the year preceding the interview. If there was a steady flow of in-migrants (say 2 percent per month) with very little out-flow, it would yield a distribution similar to that shown in Table 9-4-C. If there was a great deal of nomadism, there would be a large concentration in the 0-5 months' range, with a small number in the above-9-months' range. The teetotalers, light drinkers, and moderate drinkers tend to fall into the above-9-months' range, indicating relative permanency for this group. The con-

centration of heavy drinkers in the 0-5 months' range indicates that, at most, only 8-10 percent of them are highly mobile. Alcoholic derelicts are in a low-mobility class, with a heavy concentration in the 5-12 months' range.

An interesting sidelight of this table is that it shows the proportion of men eligible for public assistance. Even if every man who left Chicago once during the year also left the state, almost three-fourths of the men on Skid Row would nevertheless be eligible for public assistance under the one-year residence requirement in Illinois. The true figure is perhaps roughly 80-85 percent. Only about two-thirds of the chronic alcoholics are able to satisfy the residence requirement because they depart to work as gandy dancers or to wander. Comparatively few men would be excluded by raising the requirement to two years.

Geographical Divisions Visited by Migrants (Table 9-4-D). — The Skid Row men who had left Chicago during the year preceding the interview tended to go to one of the nearby North Central states. Only about 10 percent of the migrants visited each of the other divisions. None went to New England. The Pacific Coast (California) and the South Atlantic (Florida) attracted an above-average number. The geographic pattern of migration seems to be influenced by (a) the sites to which railroads send maintenance gangs (West North Central and Mountain divisions), (b) by the home states of many of the men (Midwest and South), and (c) by the desire to spend a part of the year in a warm climate.

A tabulation was made of the places to which the men go when they do leave town. A disproportionately large share of trips were made between Chicago and:

New York City
Minneapolis
Detroit
St. Louis
Los Angeles
Milwaukee

These are all cities with major Skid Rows. But they are also large nearby cities that could be expected to have an unusual attraction for all of Chicago's residents, or they are areas that attract migrants from the entire nation. There seems to be little evidence that such migration as does occur is extremely concentrated between a few major Skid Rows. Instead, it is predominantly a circular pattern between Chicago's Skid Rows and some remote point away from a major Skid Row. This pattern is created largely by gandy dancers who comprise a large share of the mobile population.

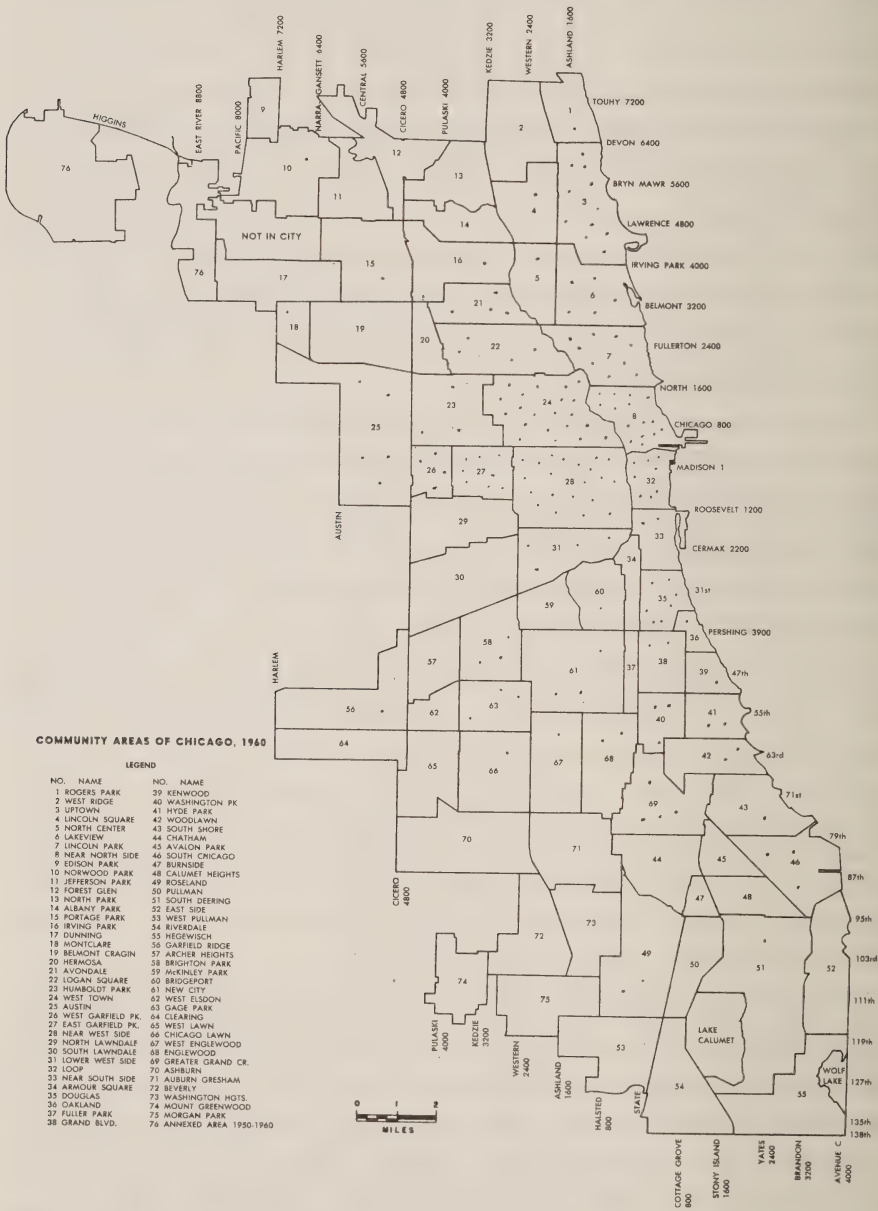
Residence during Spring and Summer Preceding the Interview (Table 9-4-E). — Because Skid Row casual laborers tend to do their wandering in the warm months of the year, the men were asked where they spent most of the last spring and summer. More than 80 percent were in Chicago. Many of the trips for railroad maintenance last only one to three weeks, so that many gandy dancers spent most of the summer in Chicago if they were able to get assigned only once. The regional pattern is similar to that already reported for places visited last year.

Mobility between Skid Row and the Rest of Chicago. — The results of the above analysis suggest that the greatest mobility between Skid Row and the "outside world" is not the flow of men dropping off trains, trucks, and buses bound for Chicago, but the much less spectacular drift onto Skid Row from other neighborhoods in Chicago. It would be a mistake to regard Skid Row as a world apart from the rest of Chicago, fed by strangers from outside. The truth seems to be that it is an integral part of Chicago, and Chicago itself supplies the lion's share of the annual draft of Skid Row recruits.

In order to test these ideas, the men were asked to list all of the places they had lived since coming to Chicago the last time. This question favors a response nominating Skid Row as the only place of residence. All other men who already are Skid Row regulars but who do travel would give this address. The same would be true for the gandy dancer who has just returned from a short out-of-town work trip and the low-income newcomer who has just arrived and is living in a cubicle hotel until he gets started. Nevertheless, almost one-half of the men (45 percent) gave at least one Chicago address other than Skid Row, and 15 percent gave two or more other Chicago addresses. Since all of these men had been at another Chicago address before coming to Skid Row, these data suggest that at least one-half the residents arrive directly from some other neighborhood in Chicago. Far from being a community of non-Chicagoans, Skid Row seems to be primarily a local product — an assemblage of maladjusted men whose maladjustment developed in Chicago and for which the local community bears the major burden of legal and social responsibility.

In an effort to study further the interaction between Skid Row and the rest of the city, a dot map was prepared showing the community areas of Chicago in which the men lived before coming to Skid Row (Map 9-1). On this map the boundaries define areas as "slum," "blighted," or "nonproblem," according to the 1950 census statistics for housing. It is evident that in a high percentage of cases, the man's last address before coming to Skid Row was in a slum area. The addresses given refer only to the place of residence immediately prior to Skid Row. This figure probably understates the extent to which men are drawn from the nonproblem areas of the city. The man may have undergone substantial

Map 9-1. NEIGHBORHOODS OF THE CITY WHERE HOMELESS MEN HAVE LIVED DURING THE 12 MONTHS PRECEDING THE INTERVIEW: 1958




COMMUNITY AREAS OF CHICAGO, 1960

LEGEND

| NO. | NAME | NO. | NAME |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | ROGERS PARK | 39 | KENWOOD |
| 2 | WEST RIDGE | 40 | WASHINGTON PK |
| 3 | UPTOWN | 41 | HYDE PARK |
| 4 | LINCOLN SQUARE | 42 | WOODLAWN |
| 5 | NORTH CENTER | 43 | SOUTH SHORE |
| 6 | LAKEVIEW | 44 | CHATHAM |
| 7 | LINCOLN PARK | 45 | AVALON PARK |
| 8 | NEAR NORTH SIDE | 46 | SOUTH CHICAGO |
| 9 | EDISON PARK | 47 | BURNSIDE |
| 10 | NORWOOD PARK | 48 | CALUMET HEIGHTS |
| 11 | JEFFERSON PARK | 49 | ROSELAND |
| 12 | FOREST GLEN | 50 | PULLMAN |
| 13 | NORTH PARK | 51 | SOUTH DEERING |
| 14 | ALBANY PARK | 52 | EAST SIDE |
| 15 | PORTAGE PARK | 53 | WEST PULLMAN |
| 16 | IRVING PARK | 54 | RIVERDALE |
| 17 | DUNNING | 55 | HEGEWISCH |
| 18 | MONTCLARE | 56 | GARFIELD RIDGE |
| 19 | BELMONT CRAGIN | 57 | ARCHER HEIGHTS |
| 20 | HERMOSA | 58 | BRIGHTON PARK |
| 21 | AVONDALE | 59 | McKINLEY PARK |
| 22 | LOGAN SQUARE | 60 | BRIDGEPORT |
| 23 | HUMBOLDT PARK | 61 | NEW CITY |
| 24 | WEST TOWN | 62 | WEST ELSDON |
| 25 | AUSTIN | 63 | GAGE PARK |
| 26 | WEST GARFIELD PK. | 64 | CLEARING |
| 27 | EAST GARFIELD PK. | 65 | WEST LAWN |
| 28 | NEAR WEST SIDE | 66 | CHICAGO LAWN |
| 29 | NORTH LAWNDALE | 67 | WEST ENGLEWOOD |
| 30 | SOUTH LAWNDALE | 68 | ENGLEWOOD |
| 31 | LOWER WEST SIDE | 69 | GREATER GRAND CR. |
| 32 | LOOP | 70 | ASHBURN |
| 33 | NEAR SOUTH SIDE | 71 | AUBURN GRESHAM |
| 34 | ARMOUR SQUARE | 72 | BEVERLY |
| 35 | DOUGLAS | 73 | WASHINGTON HGTS. |
| 36 | OAKLAND | 74 | MOUNT GREENWOOD |
| 37 | FULLER PARK | 75 | MORGAN PARK |
| 38 | GRAND BLVD. | 76 | ANNEXED AREA 1950-1960 |

downward mobility and have moved from a superior to an inferior residence before moving onto Skid Row. In any case, Skid Row seems to be composed of men from low-income neighborhoods who leave their own neighborhoods for various reasons — unemployment, poor health, inadequate pension, or uncontrolled drinking.

A different type of mobility which cannot be measured with data from this survey is manifested by the many Skid Row men who live off Skid Row when they can afford it and move to Skid Row only when their money runs low. Thus, Map 9-1 also indicates those areas of the city in which the men live when they have steady work.

More than 40 percent of the men had lived off Skid Row at some time during the year preceding the interview. This may have been before coming to Skid Row, leaving Skid Row to live in a labor camp, or moving off Skid Row during times of steady employment and returning when the job ended. The fact that the Skid Row population appears to be roughly constant in size or declining somewhat suggests that the rate of outmigration each year is roughly 40 percent, also. Thus, for each 10 men one encounters on Skid Row, 6 have been on a Skid Row continuously throughout the preceding year, and 4 are either newcomers or men who have lived a part of the year away. And for each set of 10 men, there appear to be about 4 who have drifted out of Skid Row areas to other cities or to other parts of Chicago. Some of these men will return from work camps, other Skid Rows, or from small towns where they are visiting, and some will never return because they have climbed permanently off Skid Row into more desirable neighborhoods.

## CONCLUSION

The Skid Row population is about twice as migratory as the general population of Chicago, as measured by state-of-birth data. But this migration seems to have been movement during youth or a one-time movement directly to Chicago. Once they arrive in Chicago, few of the Skid Row residents leave, except for routine gandy-dancer work for the railroad and a minor city-to-city drift of heavy drinkers. The theory that Chicago collects social misfits from the entire Middle West and hence is a heavy loser in the social welfare field is only mildly justified, if at all. The facts seem to be that Chicago "grows its own" Skid Row population, either from persons born here or from in-migrants, in more than one-half the cases, and probably exports substantial numbers of men to the Skid Rows of other cities. Skid Row men have an overwhelmingly urban and metropolitan rather than a rural background, both in terms of place of birth and place where reared. Whatever social and economic forces are now at work to create Skid Rows, they seem

to have their roots in modern city life rather than in social change from a rural to an urban way of living. Indications are that migration and spatial mobility among these men are declining. In the future, each city's Skid Row will tend more and more to be a product of its own social and economic mistakes.

This is in many ways a discouraging set of findings. If Skid Row problems, especially alcoholism, could be attributed to the transition from rural to urban life, there would be the comfortable prospect that the phenomenon would disappear when the transition is completed. Instead, the urban origins and low mobility of the homeless men suggest that they reflect undesirable forces that are inherent in contemporary metropolitan life.

Nomadism is a common but minor part of Skid Row; perhaps 10-15 percent of the men are chronic or frequent wanderers. A guess could be hazarded that with an attractive and sympathetic major program of rehabilitation for Chicago's men would come an increase in the number of in-migrants, but this would be only of moderate size. Since such a large share of homeless men seem to be victims of the local situation and have strong local ties, it is doubtful whether there is much truth to the common belief that if the police and courts of a city are really rough and tough, they will discourage in-migration and thereby shrink the size of their Skid Row.

*Chapter 10*

## *RECREATION ON SKID ROW*

What do the homeless men on Skid Row do for recreation? What relation is there between types of activities and extent of drinking? What recreation would the men like but cannot afford or for which there are no facilities on Skid Row? These three topics are the subject of this chapter.

### I. CURRENT RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES

A list of ten types of recreation was drawn up. As each homeless man was interviewed, he was asked how often he engaged in each type of recreation. Following is a list of the activities and the percentage of men who engaged in each type at least once a month.

| | Percent of men doing once a month or more |
|---|---|
| Watching television | 70 |
| Going to a tavern or bar | 66 |
| Going to movies | 54 |
| Attending mission services | 44 |
| Playing cards | 35 |
| Going to Reading Room | 28 |
| Playing checkers | 19 |
| Gambling, playing horses, playing numbers | 6 |
| Going to penny arcades, shooting galleries | 5 |
| Going to burlesque shows | 4 |

The last three items of this list form such a small part of the recreational activity of the men that they are dropped from the analysis that follows. It is well known that penny arcades and burlesque shows are usually located on the Skid Row fringe, but as one informant said, "They are for the college boys." Outsiders just curious enough to venture onto Skid Row are the economic life-blood of the tattoo artist, the burlesque queen, the barker with his wares at the penny arcade, and the bars and

taverns which hint that there is stripteasing to be seen inside. Most homeless men ignore these places.

Television. — The survey shows that 51 percent of the men watch TV every day, and almost two-thirds of them watch it twice a week or more (Table 10-1). Most hotel lobbies now have a television set which plays almost continuously from 10:00 A.M. until 10:30 P.M., making them more attractive gathering places than formerly. A quick visit to the lobbies of the Skid Row hotels on a winter evening would find almost every seat taken with either TV-watchers or card-players, and in many hotels there would be men standing to watch the television. The Reading Room provides a quieter setting for watching, away from the noise of the typical cubicle-hotel lobby.

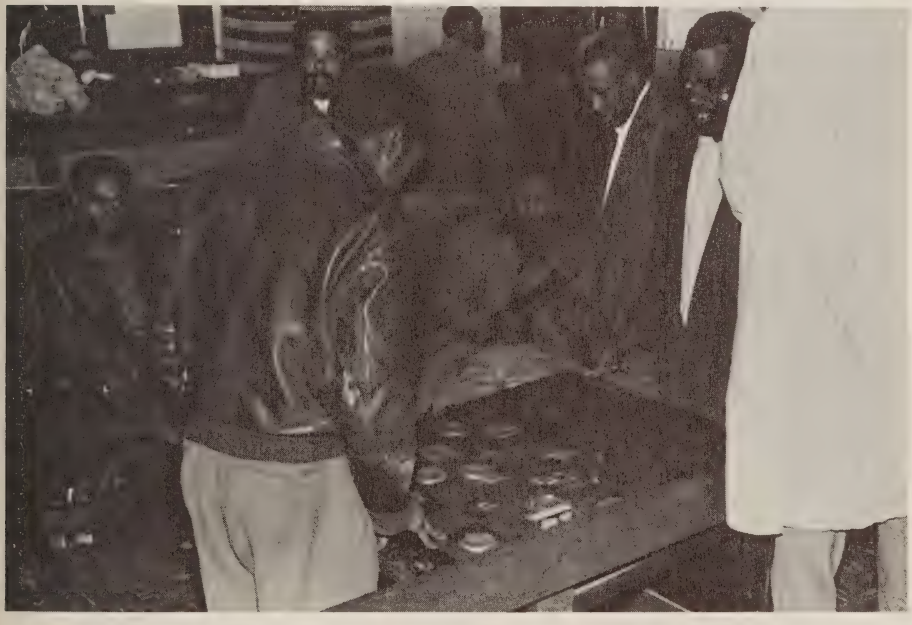
Despite its popularity, there is much grumbling about TV. There are disagreements over which channel to watch; noise and poor acoustics create difficulties in hearing; limited seating space means that some men must sit great distances from the screen.

Watching television competes with drinking as a pastime; and it is probably true that at almost any time of the day or early evening more men are watching television in hotel lobbies and in the Reading Room than are in the taverns. Being able to watch television without going to the taverns has probably served to curtail excessive drinking more than any other recreational activity.

Taverns. — Almost one-third of the total Skid Row population go to a tavern daily, and almost one-half go twice a week or more. Many of the moderate drinkers and light drinkers have the custom of drinking a little beer or "having a shot" with friends on one evening or more during the week. More than one-fourth of all homeless men use the taverns in this moderate way. Since, however, the chronic alcoholics come every day and the moderate drinkers come only a few times per week, on any one evening the chronic drinkers greatly outnumber the moderate and light drinkers in Skid Row taverns and are very conspicuous because of their behavior. Many observers insist that if the three hundred worst drunks were to be taken off Skid Row, the taverns would not be much different from workingmen's taverns anywhere else. This action, if taken as part of a rehabilitation program, probably would improve the tavern atmosphere very drastically. It would also greatly reduce jackrolling, reduce the necessity for such a large police force on Skid Row, and reduce other problems related to drinking.

Throughout the world and for at least two centuries the neighborhood tavern has been one of the best-liked and most universal forms of recreation among men who work with their muscles — especially among those without families. However, the taverns do need to be regulated so that they do not become simply factories producing intoxicated men as fast as possible and selling the maximum quantity of liquor to each

WATCHING TELEVISION AT THE MUNICIPAL READING ROOM PROVIDES ALCOHOL-LESS ENTERTAINMENT FOR HUNDREDS EACH WEEK



A CHECKER GAME AT THE MUNICIPAL READING ROOM. THIS IS A POPULAR GAME ON SKID ROW

Table 10-1. PERCENT OF HOMELESS MEN ON SKID ROW WHO PARTICIPATE IN SELECTED TYPES OF RECREATION

| Frequency | All homeless men | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Movies | Taverns and bars | Burlesque | Penny arcades | Playing checkers | Playing cards | Horses, lottery | Watching TV | Reading room | Church services |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| None | 41.2 | 27.3 | 90.7 | 90.5 | 75.6 | 58.8 | 88.3 | 24.8 | 65.6 | 50.6 |
| 1-3 times per month | 13.0 | 6.8 | 2.6 | 1.2 | 4.8 | 6.6 | 1.8 | 2.4 | 6.5 | 12.0 |
| 4 times per month (once a week) | 10.8 | 9.8 | 0.9 | 1.3 | 4.3 | 6.9 | 1.5 | 2.8 | 3.8 | 10.0 |
| 5-8 times per month | 1.7 | 1.7 | ... | ... | 0.7 | 0.7 | ... | 0.9 | ... | 1.2 |
| 9 times per month (twice a week) | 14.6 | 7.7 | 0.4 | 1.1 | 2.7 | 6.2 | 0.5 | 4.2 | 3.9 | 6.0 |
| 10-29 times per month | 12.9 | 8.5 | ... | 0.8 | 3.1 | 4.7 | 1.2 | 8.6 | 6.1 | 7.1 |
| 30 or more times per month (one or more per day) | 1.3 | 31.7 | ... | 0.2 | 3.2 | 10.0 | 1.1 | 50.9 | 8.1 | 7.2 |
| No information | 4.5 | 6.6 | 5.4 | 4.9 | 5.5 | 6.2 | 5.6 | 5.4 | 6.1 | 5.8 |

SITTING IN THE LOBBY, READING THE NEWSPAPER, WATCHING OTHERS, OR CONVERSING, IS A LEADING WINTER PASTIME

MEN PLAYING POOL AT THE SALVATION ARMY RECREATION ROOM. (PHOTO COURTESY SALVATION ARMY)

customer; they should not become convenient settings for prostitution or jackrolling; they should be prohibited from engaging in tie-in activities with employment offices or hotels whereby the man owes his paycheck before he is paid.

Movies. — One-fourth of the men go to the movies twice a week or more. Skid Row has its own movie houses, and there are other neighborhood theaters nearby where many men go when they want to "get off the Row."

Mission Services. — The mission gives the men something to do during the evening instead of sitting in a lobby (where many have sat all day) or in the tavern. They can participate in group singing and get something to eat at the end. About 1 homeless man in 14 makes this a part of his daily life, and more than one-fifth go twice a week or more. Yet about one-half of the men boycott the mission services altogether. It is quite possible that if the recreational aspect were emphasized a little more and the accusational aspect were tempered somewhat, the men would attend more frequently.

Reading Room. — The number of men who make use of the City of Chicago's Reading Room is hard to believe. If the 8 percent of our sample who stated that they use this facility nearly every day is generalized to the entire Skid Row population, it implies that almost 975 different men are served every day in this one facility. It is true that during the winter months the Reading Room is filled to capacity almost continuously and that men line up outside in a long queue awaiting their turn. (The queue sometimes gets half a block long and would be longer, but the men know they must wait for an hour in the cold before they can get inside.) Probably no single municipal facility for education, recreation, or welfare gets more intensive use than the Reading Room. It provides facilities not only for reading, but also for shaving, bathing, washing clothes, playing checkers, watching television — all in a quiet atmosphere where there is no drinking. Many of the men who spend time here are those who have no residence — who sleep in freight cars, warehouses, and other outdoor places. If the Reading Room were doubled in size, operated for longer hours, and its functions expanded, it could be made into an even more effective recreational weapon against alcoholism. It badly needs the assistance of both private charitable agencies and public support through a bigger budget.

Cards and Checkers. — These are pastimes for a substantial number of men. Most hotels have the necessary cards and boards, and the clerks on duty are ordered to prevent gambling. However, two-thirds or more of the men never play cards or checkers. Among those who do find these games interesting, many play almost every day.

## II. RECREATION BY DRINKING-DISABILITY-AGE CLASSIFICATION

The above over-all picture of recreation on Skid Row does not apply equally to all homeless men; their recreational activities differ according to age, extent of drinking, and extent of disability. The recreation information was analyzed for each of six different groups of men. (The data are not reported in statistical tables.) This analysis yielded the following information:

Elderly Men Who Are Severely or Moderately Handicapped. — This group of men has far less recreation than any other set of men on Skid Row — the great majority of them have no recreational activity except watching TV in the hotel lobbies and having an occasional drink in a tavern. Although a small percentage of them attend mission services, go to the Reading Room, and attend movies, the rate of their participation is much below the average.

Elderly Men Only Slightly Handicapped or Not Handicapped at All. — The picture of recreation for this group is similar to that for the first group, except it is somewhat less severe. These men participate in recreation more often than do the handicapped elderly men, but still to a small extent. The Reading Room is especially important for this group. Television, cards and checkers, and mission services are the other leading forms of recreation. About 20 percent of these men go to the taverns rather frequently, and the rest almost never go.

Young and Middle-Aged Men (20-64 years), Severely or Moderately Handicapped, Who Are Teetotalers, Light Drinkers, or Moderate Drinkers. — Like the elderly men, these younger disabled men tend to be inactive and to have little recreation. Since they are not chronic alcoholics, they visit the taverns only one to three times per week; one-third never go. While they attend movies, play cards, go to the Reading Room, and attend church services more often than the elderly men, they nevertheless participate less than do the men who are not handicapped (see below).

Young and Middle-Aged Men (20-64 years), Slightly Handicapped or Not Handicapped at All, Who Are Teetotalers, Light Drinkers, or Moderate Drinkers. — As would be expected, this is one of Skid Row's more active groups. More than two-thirds go to movies (almost one-half attend twice a week), and many have contacts off Skid Row. Their attendance at mission services, use of the Reading Room, and watching TV are all slightly below average for Skid Row, probably because many spend leisure time in other parts of the city. Because they are not chronic alcoholics, they go to the taverns only one to three times per week; one-third never go to Skid Row taverns.

Young and Middle-Aged Men (20-64 years), Severely or Moderately Handicapped, Who Are Heavy Drinkers or Chronic Alcoholics. — Men

in this group have a double problem — physical disability and alcoholism. Almost two-thirds of them are in the taverns every day, and many of those who do not go to the taverns daily are bottle-drinkers. However, they attend mission services much more frequently than do the nondrinkers; they watch TV more often (possibly in the taverns); they make more frequent use of the Reading Room; and a higher percentage of them play cards than do younger men who are not heavy drinkers. Many of the men in this group are recovering from illnesses or injuries and cannot work. Although they are of working age, they have the problem of filling up a whole day as well as the evening. For this reason, they make more intensive use of Skid Row's recreational facilities than any other group.

Young and Middle-Aged Men (20-64 years), Slightly Handicapped or Not Handicapped at All, Who Are Heavy Drinkers or Alcoholic Derelicts. — The men in this group, combined with those in the preceding one, are the most frequent patrons of the taverns. Since many have jobs, they attend movies more often. Also, they go to mission services somewhat more often than do the alcoholics who are handicapped.

## III. RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES THE MEN WANT BUT DO NOT HAVE

Suggestions of the Men. — In an effort to help find out what might be done to improve the recreational set-up on Skid Row, each man was asked to list the activities he would like to engage in but could not — either because he could not afford it, because there were no facilities available to him, or for other reasons. Almost one-half of the men mentioned nothing. (For many of these men the "cure" would be to get off Skid Row, not to improve the recreation.) Of those who answered, the following are the types of things wanted, in order of preference. (For a tabulation of suggestions by the above six categories of men, see Table 10-2.)

| | Percent of men who suggested new types of recreation |
|---|---|
| Bowling, participation in sports | 20 |
| Attending sports events — baseball, football games | 16 |
| Going to the movies | 16 |
| Pursuing hobbies — shopwork, handicrafts | 12 |
| Going to other parts of the city, getting better social contacts | 9 |
| Going to concerts, plays, talks | 4 |
| Painting, playing musical instruments | 3 |
| Watching TV, listening to radio, hi-fi | 2 |

A RATHER GRIM COFFEE PARTY IS HELD EACH MORNING AT THE JAIL WHEN SALVATION ARMY DISTRIBUTES FREE REFRESHMENTS TO MEN DETAINED OVERNIGHT. JUDGE HYMAN FELDMAN AND HIS ASSISTANT IN CENTER OF PHOTO

ELDERLY PENSIONERS ATTENDING A MEETING OF SALVATION ARMY'S GOLDEN AGERS CLUB AT HARBOR LIGHT CENTER

These recommendations must be interpreted with caution. There is no assurance that if facilities were available these men would make extensive use of them. However, they may be worthy of a small experimental pilot program.

A highly suggestive characteristic of these responses is the desire to do something active. Many of their waking hours are spent sitting, and most of the recreation now available is also of this type.

Table 10-2. PERCENT OF HOMELESS MEN ON SKID ROW WHO WOULD LIKE TO ENGAGE IN RECREATIONAL ACTIVITIES, BY TYPE OF ACTIVITY AND REASON FOR NOT PERFORMING, BY DRINKING-DISABILITY-AGE CLASSIFICATION

| Activity | All homeless men | Elderly men (65 years and over) | | Young and middle-aged men (20-64 years) | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | Teetotalers, light and moderate drinkers | | Heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts | |
| | | Severely and moderately handicapped | Slightly and not at all handicapped | Severely and moderately handicapped | Slightly and not at all handicapped | Severely and moderately handicapped | Slightly and not at all handicapped |
| Watching TV, listening to radio, hi-fi | 2.0 | ... | ... | 1.2 | 2.1 | 1.8 | 4.6 |
| Attending sports events: baseball, football, etc. | 16.3 | 7.1 | ... | 13.8 | 16.0 | 18.8 | 26.9 |
| Going to movies | 16.0 | 11.9 | ... | 19.6 | 14.4 | 23.5 | 15.1 |
| Going to concerts, plays | 3.6 | 8.9 | 14.3 | 1.2 | 1.3 | 1.8 | 5.9 |
| Bowling, participation in sports | 20.5 | 12.5 | ... | 18.5 | 22.9 | 20.0 | 28.6 |
| Reading, studies, letter-writing | 5.4 | 5.4 | ... | 4.6 | 3.9 | 6.5 | 9.2 |
| Hobbies: shopwork, handicrafts | 11.8 | 5.4 | ... | 19.6 | 12.1 | 15.9 | 6.7 |
| Painting, playing musical instruments | 2.9 | ... | 7.1 | 4.6 | 1.5 | 4.1 | 3.8 |
| Going to other parts of city: better social contacts | 8.8 | 3.6 | ... | 8.8 | 7.2 | 12.4 | 14.3 |
| Had no spare time: | | | | | | | |
| None mentioned | 43.0 | 49.4 | 64.3 | 43.8 | 46.9 | 40.6 | 29.4 |
| No answer given | 6.3 | 10.1 | 14.3 | 5.4 | 2.8 | 7.6 | 8.0 |
| Reasons for not performing: | | | | | | | |
| Can't afford | 45.6 | 35.1 | 14.3 | 48.5 | 46.4 | 47.1 | 52.9 |
| No place to do them | 12.6 | 10.7 | ... | 9.6 | 10.8 | 17.6 | 18.5 |
| Old hobbies | 14.2 | 10.7 | 7.1 | 21.9 | 12.1 | 15.9 | 11.8 |

It is important to note that the younger men, especially, vote for participation activities. Workers in missions, in welfare agencies, and in private charitable organizations have urged that these men be given a small park where they can pitch horseshoes, play baseball, or converse without having to be either in a bar or loafing on the street. They have suggested that a high school gymnasium be made available

on some evenings. A shop and handicrafts program could very well be an important part of a combined vocational training and alcoholism treatment program.

It is also important to note that although the teetotalers and light drinkers were most in favor of new forms of recreation, impressively large numbers of heavy drinkers also showed interest in changing Skid Row's recreational structure.

Men's Reasons for Not Pursuing These Activities at Present. — The men were asked why they do not engage in the forms of recreation they suggested. In almost one-half of the cases the reason given was that they could not afford it. In about one-eighth of the cases there were said to be no facilities available, while in about one-seventh of the cases the men were just doing wishful thinking about an old hobby they had allowed to lapse. Table 10-2 emphasizes that cost to the man is a very important part of any recreational program that is devised. When a man is barely making ends meet, even a dime can be a large sum.

## SUMMARY AND IMPLICATIONS

The recreational facilities that are provided on Skid Row are used almost to capacity. The hotel lobbies are filled with TV-watchers and card-players; the Reading Room is filled and has a long waiting line during the winter; the missions have nearly full houses every night during the winter. Actually, the taverns have more spare capacity than other facilities, and several taverns on Skid Row are not doing well financially. Yet all of the taverns together reach 50 percent more men than do the missions. Though it is filled to capacity, the Reading Room can serve only a small fraction of the men, although each man is allowed to stay only an hour or so when it is crowded. Many men on Skid Row, especially the elderly and handicapped men, have almost no recreation.

When asked what kinds of recreation they wanted, the men mentioned types of recreation that would permit them to be more active. The things they mentioned are of the same sort that welfare workers have found to be conspicuously successful in assisting elderly people who do not live on Skid Row. It is entirely possible that a rather conventional program for elderly and handicapped persons would do much to relieve the monotony of life for these men and would lead many drinkers to eventual rehabilitation.

The information assembled concerning recreation also makes it clear that the tavern, as a friendly meeting-place for workingmen, provides important recreation for men who are only light drinkers.

*Chapter 11*

## *RACE, RELIGION, AND POLITICS ON SKID ROW*

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### I. NEGROES, PUERTO RICANS, AND INDIANS ON SKID ROW

Skid Row and its immediate environment have changed as a result of recent migrations. The inner slum areas which used to be occupied by European immigrants (Polish, Italian, Czech, Greek, etc.) have become increasingly occupied by Negroes coming from the South in large numbers since 1941. In addition, many hundreds of Indians have moved from reservations into the major cities; in Chicago there is a large Indian settlement along North LaSalle Street adjacent to the North Clark Street Skid Row. The migration of Puerto Ricans has added another element to the changed complexion of the areas surrounding the three Chicago Skid Rows.

The general picture is that Chicago's Skid Rows are small islands of whites in a sea of Negro slums. Since poverty and personal disorganization are characteristic of some members of the new groups of Indians and Negroes, their numbers on Skid Row have increased.

The changing relationship of Skid Row with the adjacent areas is demonstrated by the following effects:

a. Negroes and Puerto Ricans have flooded into Chicago in large numbers in search of work. They have invaded the spot job market and are daily competing with Skid Row men for work as dishwashers, freight loaders, truck hands, bill peddlers, gardeners, and other unskilled work. Many large companies that formerly used Skid Row labor now hire Negroes instead. Negro workers tend to be younger and stronger than Skid Row whites and usually do not present as difficult a drinking problem. Also, all companies are under pressure to show that their hiring policy does not discriminate against Negroes, and one of the first ways to demonstrate this is to hire Negroes for all types of unskilled work. As a result of this development, several casual-labor employment agencies have set up offices in Negro neighborhoods off Skid Row. Employment offices on Skid Row have suffered from this competition, and unemployment has be-

come an even more serious problem there than it was before. Many employers who use white Skid Row labor now do so as a charitable gesture rather than because it is "good business." The missions have been forced to set up small "employment offices" in order to provide jobs for men undergoing treatment for alcoholism.

b. The Negro community in Chicago has not served as a small "hometown" for migrants from the South. Many such migrants arrive with very little money or "go broke" after a few days of searching for work. If they have no family or friends to rely upon, they must depend upon community agencies. In desperation, they show up in the soup lines and apply for cheap beds at missions. The missions have been faced with a problem of deciding whether to try to serve all who come and thus run the risk of quickly switching to an all-Negro clientele, or to strike a compromise by establishing an informal quota. The Casual Labor Office of the State Employment Service, the Madison Street Reading Room, and other city agencies cannot refuse service to Negroes, even if they wished to do so. As a result there has been a slow but steady rise in the percentage of Negroes in the audiences at the mission services and in lines at government agencies. Because discriminatory behavior would bring adverse public and political reaction, there is no firm resistance to this growth, and probably there will be none.

c. As low-income Negro migrants have flocked in from the South, a severe housing shortage has resulted. Rents charged to Negroes have skyrocketed above those of whites for the same or even better accommodations. Many landlords in Chicago found they could switch from white to Negro occupancy, raise rents as much as 25 to 35 percent (meanwhile suspending maintenance of the building), and make a very quick and large profit — in full assurance that the city and the federal government would "bail them out" with a redevelopment program when their property became too slummy for further human occupancy. This inflation in rents for Negroes has placed a very severe burden upon the new migrants just struggling to get started. As a consequence they eagerly accept cheap rental opportunities. The cubicle hotel businesses on South State Street have responded to this demand, and three cubicle-type hotels have shifted from white to nonwhite occupancy. This was a sound business move because vacancy rates were running very high when hotels there were reserved for white men. The men who live in these places are similar to the generations of job-seeking rural white migrants who preceded them and who lived "near the bottom" while they

got started.

As a result of these changes, every Skid Row in Chicago now has people of both races living in segregated but adjoining buildings, and gradually they are sharing the same establishments. Negroes are appearing far more frequently in Skid Row bars and restaurants. The stores that sell work clothes, day-old bread, groceries, and drugs on Skid Row are finding that more and more of their patrons are Negroes. Negro women now clean the rooms in the cubicle hotels; this job was performed by residents who used to work out their room rent in this manner. Already the homeless men have had Negro judges preside over their cases and give them sentences at the Monroe Street Court. More and more Negro children play in the alleys and vacant lots around Skid Row. Young Negro jackrollers and Negro prostitutes patrol Skid Row streets, trying to earn a living from the white residents. These changes, added to what is happening at the missions, labor offices, and Reading Room, indicate just one thing: Skid Row is being "invaded" by Negroes and within twenty to twenty-five years probably will be either all-Negro or integrated. This change is taking place so gradually that many people on Skid Row seem not to notice it.

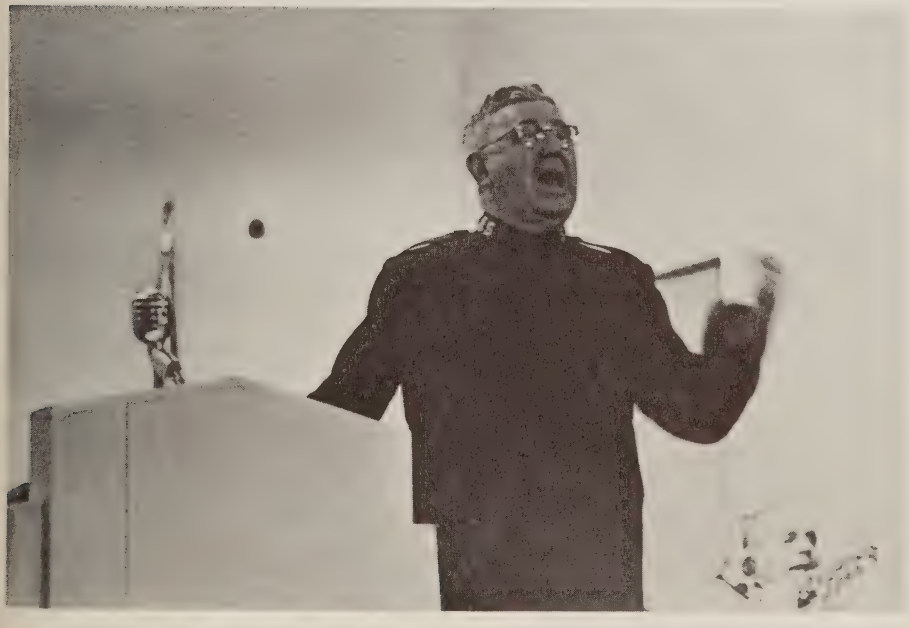
It is against this background of change that the results of the 1957-58 Skid Row survey must be interpreted.

Area of Residence (Table 11-1-A). — During the winter of 1957-58 there were an estimated 1,100 Negroes and 230 Indians on the three Skid Rows (9.2 percent and 1.9 percent, respectively, of all Skid Row population). Table 11-1-A shows how these were distributed among the Skid Rows. Almost two-thirds of the Negroes lived on South State Street (where the three Negro cubicle hotels and one of the large missions that will serve Negroes are located). Roughly three-fourths of the Indians were found on West Madison Street. Although they live adjacent to the North Clark Street Skid Row, the Indian men prefer to go to West Madison Street when they go on a binge. There are two hotels in particular where they tend to stay when they live on West Madison Street. In general, they are well-treated by the other men who live on West Madison Street and apparently feel more secure there when they drink.

Drinking Classification (Table 11-1-B). — In comparison with the general Skid Row population there are very few alcoholic derelicts and heavy drinkers among the Negro men. Many of them are merely workingmen searching for work who live there because the price of other housing is beyond their means. Nevertheless, the seeds of the Skid Row culture of alcoholism are present in the Negro cubicle hotels, and 13 percent of the Negro men (estimated to be about 145 men) were chronic alcoholics.

At the other extreme, more than one-half of the Indians were classi-

CHURCH SESSION AT HARBOR LIGHT CENTER



SALVATION ARMY CHAPLAIN EXHORTING MEN TO TRY TO GET OFF SKID ROW

Table 11-1. CHARACTERISTICS OF NEGROES AND INDIANS ON SKID ROW: CHICAGO, 1957-58

| Characteristic | All homeless men | Negroes | Indians |
|---|---|---|---|
| A. AREA OF RESIDENCE OF NEGROES AND INDIANS ON SKID ROW | | | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| West Madison Street | 63.1 | 31.0 | 75.0 |
| South State Street | 14.1 | 62.7 | 5.0 |
| North Clark Street | 5.8 | ... | 7.5 |
| South Clark Street, Van Buren Street, and others | 13.4 | 1.3 | 7.5 |
| Hospital, jail, sleeping out | 3.6 | 5.1 | 5.0 |
| B. DRINKING CLASSIFICATION OF NEGROES AND INDIANS ON SKID ROW | | | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Teetotalers | 14.8 | 17.7 | 7.5 |
| Light drinkers | 28.4 | 32.3 | 32.5 |
| Moderate drinkers | 24.4 | 36.1 | 7.5 |
| Heavy drinkers | 19.9 | 6.3 | 25.0 |
| Alcoholic derelicts | 12.6 | 7.6 | 27.5 |
| C. DRINKING-DISABILITY-AGE CLASSIFICATION OF NEGROES AND INDIANS ON SKID ROW | | | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Severely and moderately handicapped | 46.6 | 36.1 | 22.5 |
| Elderly (65 years of age or older) | 14.0 | 3.8 | ... |
| Teetotalers and light drinkers | 9.7 | 3.8 | ... |
| Moderate and heavy drinkers | 4.3 | ... | ... |
| Young and middle-aged (20-64 years) | 19.4 | 24.7 | 15.0 |
| Teetotalers and light drinkers | 12.6 | 12.0 | 7.5 |
| Moderate drinkers | 6.8 | 12.7 | 7.5 |
| Heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts | 13.2 | 7.6 | 7.5 |
| 20-44 years of age | 4.3 | 1.9 | 7.5 |
| 45-64 years of age | 8.9 | 5.7 | ... |
| Slightly and not handicapped | 53.5 | 64.0 | 77.5 |
| Elderly (65 years of age or older) | 3.5 | 1.9 | ... |
| Teetotalers and light drinkers | 2.3 | 1.9 | ... |
| Moderate and heavy drinkers | 1.2 | ... | ... |
| Young and middle-aged (20-64 years) | 31.9 | 55.1 | 32.5 |
| Teetotalers and light drinkers | 18.6 | 32.9 | 32.5 |
| Moderate drinkers | 13.3 | 22.2 | ... |
| Heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts | 18.1 | 7.0 | 45.0 |
| 20-44 years of age | 10.4 | 5.1 | 32.5 |
| 45-64 years of age | 7.7 | 1.9 | 12.5 |

fied as chronic alcoholics. There are explanations for this. First, alcohol appears to have a powerful effect upon Indian men. Second, the welfare program for Indians in Chicago makes the economic institutions of Skid Row superfluous for most Indians, so that they tend to live on Skid Row only to drink or to escape from the Indian colony.

Because they are younger, the Negroes and Indians have smaller percentages of severely and moderately handicapped men and higher percentages of nonhandicapped men than are found among the white men on Skid Row. Both in the handicapped and the nonhandicapped groups, and especially at the younger ages, the percentage of chronic alcoholics

MEN WHO DESIRE TO ENTER THE SALVATION ARMY REHABILITATION PROGRAM COME FORWARD AND KNEEL AT THE ALTAR WHILE THE AUDIENCE SINGS A HYMN

is smaller for the Negroes and higher for Indians than for whites.

One interesting aspect of the racial statistics is the disproportionately large number of severely or moderately disabled Negroes in the working ages (20-64 years) who were moderate drinkers. There seems to be more of a tendency to assign Negro outpatients and charity patients to Skid Row hotels for recuperation, even though they do not have a drinking problem, than low-income whites under the same circumstances.

## II. RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND RACIAL ATTITUDES OF SKID ROW MEN

Many people who are interested in Skid Row have wondered about the religious and political attitudes of Skid Row men. Since these men are at the very bottom of the social scale and can hope for little more, do they tend to have mutinous ideas about religion and economics? Would these men, who have lost every vestige of status except race, tend to be highly intolerant of Negroes and other dark-skinned people? Or do the sharing of hardship and the rejection by society make the homeless men generally less prejudiced?

### A. RELIGIOUS ATTITUDES

Church Membership (Table 11-2-A). — To the questions, "Were you ever a member of any church?" and "What church was that?" 80 percent of the men indicated some religious affiliation. A total of 17 percent reported that they had none, a much greater proportion of nonaffiliation than among the general population. Chronic alcoholism was just as prevalent among church members as among those who did not belong to a church. The religious affiliation of the men was as follows:

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| Total | 100 |
| With membership | 80 |
| Roman Catholic | 38 |
| Baptist | 14 |
| Methodist | 8 |
| Lutheran | 6 |
| Presbyterian | 3 |
| Episcopalian | 3 |
| Greek or Roman Orthodox | 1 |
| Jewish | 1 |
| Other | 6 |
| No membership, no information | 20 |

MEN EATING IN SALVATION ARMY DINING HALL. WHEN UNEMPLOYMENT IS HIGH, THERE ARE TWO FULL SETTINGS

MEN OF ALL AGES, ETHNIC ORIGINS, AND BACKGROUNDS SHARE IN THE SOUP-LINE. A FEW ARE TOO ILL TO EAT

There is no way of determining if this is representative of Chicago's religious composition, especially in the low-income groups, because statistics are lacking. The large share of Catholics reflects the concentration of first- and second-generation members from eastern and southern Europe, Puerto Rico, and Mexico. The Baptists reflect the large numbers of people from the American South. The Methodist and Lutheran groups reflect the contributions of the Midwest and Chicago's large German population, respectively. Perhaps the only definite statement that can be made is that the Jewish group definitely is underrepresented. More than 8 percent of Chicago's population is Jewish, yet less than 1 percent of the men on Skid Row are Jewish.

The correlation of marital status with religious affiliation gives few findings of significance: a disproportionately large number of the never-married men are Roman Catholic, and a disproportionately large number of the separated and divorced men are Baptists.

Table 11-2. RELIGIOUS CHARACTERISTICS OF HOMELESS MEN: CHICAGO'S SKID ROW, 1957-58

| Characteristic | All homeless men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Teetotal | Light | Moderate | Heavy | Derelict |
| A. CHURCH MEMBERSHIP OF HOMELESS MEN, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION | | | | | | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Baptist | 13.5 | 13.4 | 11.9 | 13.9 | 12.9 | 17.6 |
| Catholic | 37.9 | 46.1 | 38.8 | 32.3 | 40.2 | 33.8 |
| Episcopalian | 2.6 | ... | 2.5 | 0.7 | 5.9 | 4.6 |
| Jewish | 0.7 | 1.2 | 1.8 | ... | ... | ... |
| Lutheran | 5.5 | 5.5 | 4.3 | 7.7 | 4.7 | 5.6 |
| Methodist | 8.0 | 4.7 | 7.6 | 12.9 | 3.8 | 10.2 |
| Orthodox Greek or Russian | 1.4 | 3.1 | 1.2 | 1.4 | 1.2 | ... |
| Presbyterian | 3.4 | 4.7 | 3.3 | 3.8 | 1.2 | 4.6 |
| Other | 6.2 | 3.9 | 7.4 | 5.3 | 7.6 | 5.6 |
| Not a member of a church | 17.1 | 16.1 | 19.9 | 12.9 | 20.8 | 13.9 |
| No information | 3.6 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 9.1 | 1.8 | 4.2 |
| B. HOW RELIGIOUS ARE THE HOMELESS MEN? | | | | | | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Does not believe in God | 3.2 | 2.4 | 3.5 | 0.7 | 6.2 | 3.7 |
| Believes in God but does not like churches | 4.6 | 2.4 | 4.3 | 5.5 | 6.7 | 2.8 |
| Believes in God but does not go to mission services | 35.2 | 48.4 | 40.7 | 31.1 | 27.6 | 27.3 |
| Believes in God; goes occasionally to mission services | 46.2 | 29.9 | 42.7 | 48.1 | 53.4 | 57.9 |
| Quite religious; believes in God; does not go to mission services | 1.3 | 3.1 | 1.8 | 0.7 | 0.9 | ... |
| Quite religious; believes in God; goes often to mission services | 6.4 | 12.6 | 6.4 | 4.1 | 5.3 | 5.6 |
| No information | 3.4 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 9.8 | 0.9 | 2.8 |
| C. HOW HOMELESS MEN FEEL ABOUT THE MISSION PROGRAMS | | | | | | |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| High degree of like | 32.8 | 34.6 | 30.6 | 28.0 | 37.8 | 37.0 |
| Some like | 39.9 | 36.2 | 41.1 | 40.4 | 38.7 | 35.2 |
| Some dislike | 6.8 | 5.5 | 7.2 | 6.5 | 7.6 | 6.5 |
| High degree of dislike | 5.8 | 3.1 | 3.1 | 4.8 | 7.6 | 14.4 |
| Doesn't know program | 6.4 | 9.4 | 8.0 | 7.9 | 4.1 | ... |
| No information | 9.2 | 11.0 | 10.1 | 12.4 | 4.1 | 6.9 |

Holding marital status constant, the percentage of men who are chronic alcoholics varies surprisingly little from one religious group to another. For example, Catholic men who are single have a slightly smaller proportion of heavy drinkers and chronic alcoholics than have the single men of other faiths, but Catholic men who are separated and divorced have a slightly greater proportion of chronic alcoholics than have the separated and divorced men of other faiths. Although they are slight, a few tendencies may be seen:

a. Even though Episcopal membership is very small on Skid Row (2.6 percent), a very high percentage of this group are chronic alcoholics. In general, members of this group tend to be from middle- or upper-class families, and come to Skid Row primarily to drink, rather than for economic reasons. A similar conclusion seems to be valid for Lutherans.
b. No case of alcoholism was found among the very small group of Jewish men on Skid Row. Informal observation indicated that the Jewish men who refused to be interviewed, like those interviewed, were also not chronic alcoholics. This absence of chronic alcoholism among Jewish people has been observed in other studies.
c. A disproportionately large number of Baptists are alcoholics. This tendency was especially marked among single men.

There is very little relationship between religious affiliation and alcoholism, as has been illustrated. For the most part the religious composition of Skid Row merely reflects indirectly the economic, ethnic, and racial composition of the low-income groups in Chicago, the Midwest, and the South — the areas from which the Skid Row population is predominantly drawn.

Religious Attitudes of the Homeless Men (Table 11-2-B). — Three questions were asked about the religious attitudes of the men at the time of the interview: "Do you believe in God?" "How do you feel about churches in general?" and "How often do you attend church services at one of the missions?" Only 3 percent of the men professed not to believe in God, and 5 percent expressed dislike for all churches even though they did believe in God. Ninety-two percent said they believed in God and were sympathetic to religious organizations generally.

Only a small share (8 percent) of the men could be classified as "quite religious." The vast majority have a rather casual attitude toward religion. The mission is the only form of church attendance for all but a very small fraction. A few of the Catholic men attend mass at churches off Skid Row. Almost none of the Protestant men attend regular Protestant churches off Skid Row. About 35 percent of the men say they believe in God but never go to mission services, and an additional

46 percent say they believe in God, but go to mission services only occasionally. Actually, religious attendance probably is somewhat greater than indicated, as the total recorded attendance each day at all mission services combined, in the dead of winter, was equal to 6-9 percent of the Skid Row population.

The teetotalers and light drinkers on Skid Row tended to be men who believed in God but who seldom, if ever, attended mission services. Many of the men who claimed not to believe in God were heavy drinkers. But an above-average share of the men who did indicate a positive attitude toward religion also tended to be heavy drinkers or alcoholic derelicts. This finding suggests that a man who has spent all of his money for alcohol may go to a mission service to get a free meal, as well as to worship.

How Homeless Men Feel about the Mission Programs (Table 11-2-C).— The men were asked how much they liked the programs for homeless men held by the Salvation Army, Pacific Garden Mission, Christian Industrial League, and other missions. Seventy percent of the men said that they liked the programs, and only 12 percent showed active dislike. Teetotalers or light drinkers liked the programs more than did the chronic alcoholics. Among the men who were classified as alcoholic derelicts, 20 percent expressed dislike and 14 percent of this group said "dislike very much."

Religious Attitudes of the Parents. — One-fourth (26 percent) of the men reported that both their parents were very religious, and an even larger share (28 percent) said both parents were "moderately religious." Most of the remainder reported that one parent was either very religious or moderately religious. Only 9 percent reported that neither parent was religious.

There was a tendency for teetotalers to say that both parents were very religious or moderately religious; heavy drinkers tended to state that neither parent was religious, or that the mother was not religious. But in all cases the tendencies were slight; since all but a small fraction of the men had religious parents, they do not aid in distinguishing the Skid Row alcoholic from the other Skid Row men.

Church Affiliation of Parents. — The religious affiliation of the parents tended to coincide very closely with that reported by the man for himself, and in a very high proportion of cases both father and mother belonged to the same religious group as the respondent. As a result, no new information is contributed by the tabulations of church affiliation of parents. Table 11-2-A presents a close approximation of parents' affiliation.

## B. POLITICAL ATTITUDES

Political Party Preferred by the Homeless Men (Table 11-3). — Sixty-one percent of Chicago's Skid Row men said they were Democrats; only 9 percent expressed a preference for the Republican party. Almost none voiced an interest in the Socialist or other minority parties. Eight percent of the men declared they had no interest in politics, and 12 percent indicated they were independents with no party preference.

There is only a small variation in party preference according to drinking behavior. The more alcoholic men on Skid Row showed even less preference for the Republican party than did the teetotalers and light drinkers. However, the Democratic party has such a dominant majority on Skid Row that all of these differences are minor. The teetotalers tended to be less interested in politics than the men who were heavy drinkers.

Table 11-3. POLITICAL PARTY PREFERENCE OF HOMELESS MEN

| Preference | Total | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| None | 12.4 | 14.3 | 12.6 | 7.5 | 16.1 | 12.7 |
| Republican | 9.2 | 11.8 | 11.3 | 8.5 | 7.1 | 5.1 |
| Democratic | 61.0 | 45.8 | 66.3 | 63.4 | 59.8 | 65.0 |
| No interest in politics | 8.3 | 21.7 | 5.0 | 6.5 | 7.1 | 4.5 |
| No information | 9.2 | 6.4 | 4.7 | 14.1 | 9.8 | 12.7 |

Attitude toward the Republican and Democratic Parties (Table 11-4). — The men were asked to state what they thought of each of the two major parties. The attitude toward each party was probed separately, through open-ended questions, which therefore reflect the spontaneous thoughts of the respondents. Frequently the preference for the Democratic party in opposition to the Republican party was expressed in rather vague terms. Specific descriptions of the Democratic party were highly stereotyped versions of the political world as it is interpreted by "New Deal" Democrats. The homeless men tended to view the Democratic party as:

a. The party of the common people
b. The party that maintains prosperity, takes action when depression strikes
c. The party that rescued desperate people in the 1930's

Many of the men had experienced the full impact of the Great Depression and mentioned the effect which WPA, CCC, and other Democratic-sponsored emergency programs had had in their lives.

The men tended to view the Republican party as:

a. The party of wealth and power, the party of the privileged few
b. The party that gets the country into depressions

The very large part which employment levels play in the lives of Skid Row men is clearly evident and their evaluation of the political parties tends to be in those terms.

One other significant fact from Table 11-4 is that most of these men do not give the Democratic party principal credit for Social Security and other social legislation. Instead, they tend to regard such arrangements as more or less permanent parts of the national life that are no longer matters for political credit.

Table 11-4. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE (REPUBLICAN) (DEMOCRATIC) PARTY?

| Response | All homeless men | |
|---|---|---|
| | Republican party | Democratic party |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Has a tolerant attitude but does not prefer | 21.8 | 10.3 |
| Party represents wealth, power, privileged few | 17.9 | 0.9 |
| Party represents the common people, workingman, poor people | 0.2 | 20.5 |
| Good domestic economic policy, runs the country well, maintains prosperity | 3.8 | 25.8 |
| Poor domestic economic policy, gets us into a depression | 20.8 | 1.6 |
| They favor welfare, social security measures | ... | 4.1 |
| They oppose welfare, social security measures | 1.5 | 0.2 |
| Have a good foreign policy | 1.7 | 0.5 |
| Have a poor foreign policy | 3.6 | 2.7 |
| Loyal to party because parents (influential people) belong to it | 2.8 | 6.8 |
| Party represents conservatism, maintaining status quo | 1.2 | 0.2 |
| Party represents liberalism, favoring change | 0.2 | 0.4 |
| Respondent likes Ike | 4.1 | ... |
| Respondent does not like Ike | 4.0 | ... |
| Believes this party is a party of action, gets things done | 0.6 | 2.7 |
| This party has better leadership than the other | 0.6 | 2.8 |
| This party has poor leadership | 0.5 | 0.5 |
| Likes this party because of New Deal, WPA, CCC, NRA, etc | ... | 9.4 |
| Likes this party--reasons given are vague | 2.6 | 12.3 |
| Dislikes this party--reasons given are vague | 9.5 | 2.5 |
| No information, no response | 18.4 | 17.8 |

Attitude toward the Socialist Party (Table 11-5). — During the first quarter of this century the Skid Rows of America were swept by various radical political ideologies that were a mixture of trade unionism, radical socialism, and anarchy. The IWW was the most powerful of these, and at one time Chicago's Skid Row was a major capital of this semi-revolutionary group. In order to determine how much, if any, of this tradition has survived, the men were asked, "How do you feel about the Socialist party?" The results shown in Table 11-5 indicate rather conclusively that socialism on Skid Row is all but dead. One-half of the men frankly confessed they knew too little to have an opinion, and all

but a small fraction of the rest expressed disapproval. Only about 2 percent were even able to mention in a tolerant or favorable way something specific about the Socialist party, and much of this referred to the past.

Table 11-5. HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT THE SOCIALIST PARTY?

| Response | Socialist party |
|---|---|
| Total | 100.0 |
| Dislikes, identifies with communists | 6.4 |
| Considers inconsistent with freedom or democracy | 1.2 |
| Tolerant, nothing specific | 9.1 |
| Tolerant or favorable, mentions Swedish, other systems, or the economic theory | 0.2 |
| Tolerant or favorable, mentions Norman Thomas, American Socialist party | 1.4 |
| Tolerant or favorable, mentions Jeff Davis, Socialist Workers parties | 0.5 |
| Distrusts or dislikes, things impractical, won't work in U.S. | 3.5 |
| Dislikes the principle, theories, basic ideas of socialism | 4.0 |
| Replies that he does not know enough about it to judge | 46.5 |
| Dislikes, reasons vague or no reasons given | 14.0 |
| No information, no response | 15.2 |

Summary. — In political preferences, political ideology, and in political activity, Skid Row today is liberal but not radical. The men strongly support the Democratic party, primarily because they believe it best represents their economic interest. There is very little evidence of loss of faith in private business and wish for a socialistic economy. No evidence whatever was obtained that would indicate communistic inclinations.

A surprising aspect of these data is that they reveal a much higher degree of political awareness and sophistication among Skid Row men than might have been anticipated. All but a very small fraction of the men were able to verbalize a distinction between the parties and to state the reasons for their preferences in more or less abstract terms. Perhaps the explanation is that these men have much time on their hands, and find politics a perennially available and impersonal topic of conversation. The daily newspaper is still the best buy in reading material, and the men see daily newscasts on TV sets in many Skid Row taverns and hotel lobbies. Substantial numbers of the men voluntarily undertook to approve or criticize the foreign policy, to evaluate socialism's basic principles, to evaluate the abilities of the President or Vice-President, and to state their political preferences in relation to the economics of their own situations. Undoubtedly much apathy, ignorance, and prejudice underlie the political thinking of most Skid Row men. However, it is entirely possible that homeless men, on the average, are only a little less interested and qualified in politics than are other low-income groups.

## C. RACIAL AND ETHNIC ATTITUDES

Acceptance Levels of Various Groups (Table 11-6). — Each man was asked the question, "How do you feel about this ethnic group?" for those four groups of which he was not a member: Negro, Puerto Rican, American Indian, Mexican, Other (European-American). The replies in each case were probed to establish the level of acceptance or prejudice for each group and the basis for whatever prejudice existed.

Table 11-6. RACIAL AND ETHNIC ATTITUDES OF HOMELESS MEN: CHICAGO'S SKID ROW, 1957-58

| Attitude | Attitudes expressed about: | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Negroes | Puerto Ricans | Indians | Mexicans | Whites |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Absence of dislike, or positive liking or preference | 19.8 | 23.4 | 59.9 | 38.5 | 65.9 |
| Dislikes but tolerant of their rights as human beings | 18.2 | 6.0 | 5.2 | 6.2 | 3.7 |
| They are indolent, lazy, think the world owes them a living | 0.8 | 2.0 | 0.2 | 0.9 | ... |
| They are clannish, culturally different, unassimilable | 1.9 | 7.1 | 0.6 | 4.8 | ... |
| They are belligerent, brutal, not law-abiding, steal, assault | 6.2 | 14.9 | 2.4 | 7.7 | 1.8 |
| They drink excessively | 0.5 | 1.6 | 7.0 | 1.0 | ... |
| They are untidy, dirty, filthy in housekeeping and personal habits | 0.4 | 2.1 | 0.6 | 1.6 | ... |
| They are aggressive, demanding, overbearing, arrogant | 4.0 | 3.9 | 0.9 | 2.3 | ... |
| They are immoral, promiscuous | 1.0 | 0.2 | ... | 0.2 | ... |
| Believes their native intelligence, biological quality inferior | 0.3 | 0.6 | ... | 0.7 | ... |
| Dislikes: other reasons, vague dislike | 41.2 | 27.8 | 10.2 | 26.2 | 18.3 |
| No information or reaction stated | 9.3 | 17.9 | 19.1 | 14.0 | 10.4 |

In general, the white residents of Skid Row exhibit a high degree of racial and ethnic prejudice, while nonwhite and other groups exhibit distrust but a low degree of prejudice. All but a small fraction of those with prejudice were able to state specific reasons for their attitudes. The white men tended to emphasize two sets of traits in explaining their prejudice of other ethnic groups:

a. They expressed fear of the brutality, belligerence, lawlessness, and dishonesty of the groups.
b. They objected to behavior they thought aggressive, demanding, or arrogant.

As Chicago has absorbed large numbers of Negroes and Puerto Ricans, the white men on Skid Row have felt the competition of these new groups for jobs. This resentment may be a significant element in explaining their prejudices.

Negroes have the lowest degree of acceptance; about 80 percent of the white respondents who expressed an opinion admitted dislike for them. The basis for this dislike is general and vague, and much of it is tempered with admission that the rights of the Negro as a human being and citizen should be respected. There was comparatively little mention of belief in the biological or innate inferiority of Negroes.

Puerto Ricans are disliked almost as much as Negroes, but the reasons given are more clear-cut. Homeless men fear the Puerto Ricans and suspect that they come to Skid Row to jackroll or rob. They think the Puerto Rican jackroller is even more likely to kill or injure his victim than other jackrollers. Other prejudice has at its source the clannishness of Puerto Ricans, and the cultural difference between them and other Americans.

Mexicans are disliked by 60 percent of the respondents; the prejudice is less intense than it is for Puerto Ricans. The Skid Row men have lived adjacent to Chicago's large Mexican settlement for many years. In addition, they have worked with Mexicans who also ship out as gandy-dancers. Those who still reject Mexicans give vague reasons or reasons similar to those for Puerto Ricans.

American Indians are accepted by 70 percent of the men who expressed an opinion, and they have the highest rating for the minority ethnic groups. The major criticism of Indians is that they "go crazy" when they get drunk, and there are many humorous references to "firewater" and its effect upon Indian patrons in the taverns.

## Chapter 12

## DRINKING BEHAVIOR: REASONS FOR DRINKING

Perhaps the overt aspects of the drinking behavior of Skid Row men are the least informative facts about their drinking problem, for these are only the symptoms of the ailment. This chapter, after describing these external facts, undertakes to view Skid Row drinking subjectively, as it is seen by the men themselves. The value of these materials is not necessarily that they are a correct interpretation of the problem; few sick people can correctly trace the etiology of their ailment, and alcoholics should be no exception. Rather, these findings may provide guidance to persons wishing to communicate with these men about their problem in ways to which they will be responsive. The last part of the chapter consists of quotations about drinking behavior and reasons for it, taken from the interviews, and some case materials of men who were alcoholics, describing how they quit drinking. No effort will be made to draw conclusions or formulate theory at the end of this chapter; that task is postponed until after the analysis of Section II of the monograph.

Self-Classification of Drinkers. — "How heavy a drinker are you? Do you consider yourself to be a heavy drinker, a moderate drinker, a light drinker, a periodic drinker, or don't you drink at all?" These queries were made after a series of general questions about drinking on Skid Row. As Table 12-1 indicates, the men tended to classify themselves in approximately the same way as the definitions of the study, although a substantial share of the men classed by us as moderate drinkers classed themselves as light drinkers or as periodic drinkers. About one-fourth of all drinkers declared they were periodic drinkers rather than steady drinkers. This type of drinker, when genuine, is a Dr. Jeckyl-Mr. Hyde type of person. He is able to control his drinking only for a limited span of time and then suddenly indulges in a "spree" of uncontrolled drinking. On such occasions the man customarily stays drunk continuously for some days until he is physically exhausted, financially broke, or jailed. Once sobered, he goes back to work or the usual activities of his "other self." The phenomenon of the periodic drinker is much discussed on Skid Row. Some men declare that they are set, like an alarm clock, to go on a spree every so many weeks

Table 12-1. OVERT ASPECTS OF DRINKING ON SKID ROW, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION: CHICAGO, 1957-58

| Drinking behavior | All drinkers | Drinking classification | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Light | Moderate | Heavy | Derelict |
| A. SELF CLASSIFICATION OF DRINKING | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Light drinkers | 32.0 | 80.4 | 14.3 | 1.8 | 1.4 |
| Moderate drinkers | 26.4 | 19.0 | 59.2 | 13.0 | 6.5 |
| Periodic drinkers | 22.8 | 0.6 | 24.4 | 46.6 | 32.9 |
| Heavy drinkers | 18.8 | ... | 2.1 | 38.6 | 59.2 |
| B. ON HOW MANY DAYS LAST WEEK DID YOU DRINK? | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Did not drink last week | 31.1 | 45.8 | 22.9 | 25.2 | 22.1 |
| One day | 13.3 | 16.2 | 17.8 | 7.7 | 8.0 |
| Two days | 15.2 | 21.4 | 18.3 | 8.9 | 5.6 |
| Three days | 9.0 | 7.6 | 10.5 | 10.7 | 7.0 |
| Four days | 3.6 | 1.7 | 4.0 | 5.9 | 3.8 |
| Five days | 2.2 | 1.7 | 0.8 | 4.8 | 1.4 |
| Six days | 1.9 | 0.6 | 2.4 | 1.8 | 4.2 |
| Seven days | 23.6 | 5.0 | 23.2 | 35.0 | 47.9 |
| C. PINTS OF WHISKEY (OR EQUIVALENT) DRUNK LAST WEEK (AMONG MEN WHO DRANK LAST WEEK) | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Less than 0.5 pints | 20.1 | 43.6 | 19.2 | 3.8 | 4.5 |
| 0.5 to 0.9 pints | 15.7 | 26.8 | 18.5 | 6.7 | 4.5 |
| 1.0 to 1.9 pints | 17.2 | 26.3 | 19.6 | 11.5 | 4.5 |
| 2.0 to 2.9 pints | 11.3 | 3.3 | 19.2 | 8.1 | 14.9 |
| 3.0 to 4.9 pints | 13.5 | ... | 19.2 | 21.5 | 14.2 |
| 5.0 to 6.9 pints | 5.5 | ... | 3.4 | 12.0 | 9.7 |
| 7.0 to 9.9 pints | 8.9 | ... | 0.8 | 22.0 | 20.9 |
| 10.0 pints or more | 7.8 | ... | ... | 14.4 | 26.9 |
| D. WHAT DO YOU USUALLY DRINK? | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Wine | 12.4 | 4.8 | 10.1 | 17.5 | 25.5 |
| Beer | 42.2 | 67.3 | 45.9 | 26.4 | 4.2 |
| Whiskey | 16.1 | 16.6 | 18.0 | 16.3 | 11.1 |
| Whiskey-beer-wine | 9.7 | 0.6 | 3.2 | 15.1 | 32.9 |
| Beer and whiskey | 10.5 | 6.4 | 12.7 | 14.0 | 10.2 |
| Wine and whiskey and/or beer | 9.2 | 4.3 | 10.1 | 10.7 | 16.2 |
| E. HOW DO YOU USUALLY DRINK? | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Buy at bar | 59.9 | 70.8 | 64.7 | 56.2 | 32.8 |
| Buy a bottle | 28.2 | 26.6 | 26.2 | 28.7 | 34.8 |
| Half and half | 10.4 | 2.6 | 9.1 | 14.2 | 24.3 |
| Buy at bar when has money | 1.5 | ... | ... | 0.9 | 8.1 |
| F. BOTTLE DRINKING. WHERE DO YOU USUALLY GO TO DRINK A BOTTLE? | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Street, alley, doorways, any handy place | 26.0 | 2.0 | 13.0 | 33.0 | 45.0 |
| Hotel room | 72.0 | 88.0 | 85.0 | 63.0 | 62.0 |
| Other | 9.0 | 10.0 | 8.0 | 12.0 | 5.0 |
| ARE YOU USUALLY ALONE OR WITH OTHERS WHEN YOU DRINK FROM A BOTTLE? | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Usually with others | 49.0 | 42.0 | 36.0 | 59.0 | 57.0 |
| Usually alone | 45.0 | 52.0 | 64.0 | 36.0 | 32.0 |
| Half and half | 6.0 | 6.0 | ... | 6.0 | 11.0 |
| G. PERCENT OF INCOME SPENT ON DRINKING | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Less than 5 percent | 23.1 | 50.5 | 13.6 | 6.8 | 4.6 |
| 5-9 percent | 12.4 | 25.5 | 11.0 | 3.4 | ... |
| 10-14 percent | 15.0 | 22.2 | 22.0 | 4.1 | 3.1 |
| 15-24 percent | 11.6 | 1.9 | 26.1 | 14.7 | 2.6 |
| 25-39 percent | 12.2 | ... | 23.2 | 21.9 | 4.6 |
| 40-64 percent | 12.9 | ... | 3.2 | 38.4 | 20.0 |
| 65 percent or more | 12.8 | ... | 0.9 | 10.6 | 65.1 |

Table 12-1. OVERT ASPECTS OF DRINKING ON SKID ROW, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION: CHICAGO, 1957-58 (Continued)

| Drinking behavior | All drinkers | Drinking classification | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Light | Moderate | Heavy | Derelict |
| H. DO YOU DRINK BEFORE OR JUST AFTER BREAKFAST? | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Never or almost never | 67.8 | 95.2 | 76.0 | 50.3 | 17.8 |
| Occasionally | 11.0 | 3.7 | 11.4 | 21.6 | 10.2 |
| A few times a week | 5.5 | 1.1 | 6.0 | 8.4 | 10.2 |
| Almost every day | 9.7 | ... | 4.3 | 11.2 | 39.3 |
| Every day when on a spree | 6.0 | ... | 2.3 | 8.4 | 22.4 |
| I. DO YOU HAVE SPELLS OF EXTRA HEAVY DRINKING? | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| No | 63.4 | 90.8 | 61.4 | 34.9 | 49.0 |
| Yes, total | 36.6 | 9.2 | 38.6 | 65.1 | 51.0 |
| With definite periodicity | 9.0 | 1.3 | 6.1 | 19.2 | 15.6 |
| During periods of stress, worry, depression | 13.0 | 1.1 | 14.1 | 25.7 | 18.2 |
| Special occasions, holidays, celebrations | 5.5 | 3.6 | 9.2 | 3.3 | 6.8 |
| All other | 9.1 | 3.1 | 9.2 | 16.9 | 10.4 |
| J. WHAT TRIGGERS YOUR PERIODIC DRINKING? | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Nothing in particular. Occurs more or less regularly | 36.0 | ... | 27.0 | 37.0 | 42.0 |
| Tension | 16.0 | ... | 13.0 | 19.0 | 11.0 |
| Worry | 7.0 | ... | 19.0 | 2.0 | 11.0 |
| Disappointment | 4.0 | ... | 5.0 | 2.0 | 8.0 |
| Disgust with self, with living conditions | 9.0 | ... | 8.0 | 9.0 | 13.0 |
| Remembrance of the past, dread of future | 8.0 | ... | 5.0 | 11.0 | 3.0 |
| Physical pain - health | 1.0 | ... | 5.0 | ... | ... |
| Depressed feeling | 23.0 | ... | 23.0 | 28.0 | 13.0 |
| Holidays, paydays, weekends, meeting friends | 20.0 | 100.0 | 23.0 | 18.0 | 18.0 |
| K. MONTHS BETWEEN DRINKING BOUTS - PERIODIC DRINKING | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| One month | 1.7 | 0.6 | ... | 3.9 | 3.8 |
| Two months | 2.0 | 0.6 | 1.1 | 4.5 | 2.8 |
| Three months | 2.2 | ... | 1.6 | 5.1 | 3.8 |
| Four months | 1.0 | ... | ... | 3.3 | 1.4 |
| Five months | 0.2 | ... | ... | ... | 1.4 |
| Six or more months | 1.2 | ... | ... | 0.9 | 0.9 |
| Does not have periodicity | 91.6 | 98.7 | 94.4 | 82.4 | 85.8 |
| L. NUMBER OF TIMES JAILED FOR DRINKING | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Never arrested for drinking | 35.0 | 68.9 | 31.5 | 18.8 | ... |
| Never jailed for drinking | 30.4 | 20.5 | 39.1 | 42.4 | 17.8 |
| 1 time | 8.7 | 4.4 | 10.4 | 9.4 | 13.0 |
| 2 times | 5.6 | 2.9 | 4.7 | 10.2 | 5.9 |
| 3-4 times | 4.0 | 0.6 | 2.5 | 6.5 | 9.2 |
| 5-6 times | 2.9 | ... | 0.9 | ... | 15.7 |
| 7-9 times | 2.7 | ... | ... | 1.2 | 14.1 |
| 10-14 times | 1.4 | ... | ... | 2.0 | 5.4 |
| 15 times or more | 3.4 | ... | ... | 4.1 | 14.6 |
| No information | 5.9 | 2.6 | 10.7 | 5.3 | 4.3 |
| M. WHEN LAST ARRESTED FOR DRINKING? | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Never arrested | 35.0 | 68.9 | 31.5 | 18.8 | ... |
| Arrested within past week | 7.4 | ... | 3.2 | 6.5 | 29.2 |
| 1-2 weeks ago | 1.5 | ... | 0.9 | 2.9 | 3.2 |
| 2-4 weeks ago | 3.4 | ... | 3.5 | 1.2 | 12.4 |
| 1-2 months ago | 4.1 | 0.9 | 0.9 | 11.8 | 5.4 |
| 2-6 months ago | 8.3 | 0.9 | 13.2 | 10.6 | 10.3 |
| 6-9 months ago | 5.3 | 1.8 | 3.5 | 7.8 | 11.9 |
| 9-12 months ago | 4.4 | 0.9 | 3.5 | 6.9 | 9.2 |
| 1-2 years ago | 11.5 | 10.9 | 15.5 | 12.2 | 4.9 |
| 2-5 years ago | 8.8 | 5.6 | 12.0 | 10.0 | 8.1 |
| 5 or more years ago | 3.6 | 5.0 | 3.8 | 3.3 | 1.1 |
| No information | 6.7 | 5.3 | 8.5 | 8.2 | 4.3 |

Table 12-1. OVERT ASPECTS OF DRINKING ON SKID ROW, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION: CHICAGO, 1957-58 (Continued)

| Drinking behavior | All drinkers | Drinking classification | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Light | Moderate | Heavy | Derelict |
| N. TIMES HOSPITALIZED FOR DRINKING | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Never | 77.0 | 83.3 | 85.5 | 84.5 | 41.1 |
| 1 time | 9.1 | 1.8 | 3.5 | 7.8 | 34.1 |
| 2 times | 1.2 | ... | ... | ... | 7.0 |
| 3 or more times | 2.5 | ... | ... | ... | 14.6 |
| No information | 10.2 | 15.0 | 11.0 | 7.8 | 3.2 |
| O. HOW MANY TIMES HAVE YOU HAD D.T.'S? | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Never | 89.0 | 99.0 | 94.0 | 86.0 | 54.0 |
| 1 time | 6.0 | 1.0 | 3.0 | 9.0 | 23.0 |
| 2 times | 1.0 | ... | 2.0 | 2.0 | 6.0 |
| 3 times | 1.0 | ... | 1.0 | 1.0 | 4.0 |
| 4 times | ... | ... | ... | 1.0 | ... |
| 5 or more times | 2.0 | ... | 1.0 | 2.0 | 14.0 |
| P. WHEN WAS LAST TIME HAD D.T.'S? | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Within past year | 26.0 | ... | 20.0 | 16.0 | 35.0 |
| 1-2 years ago | 9.0 | ... | ... | 19.0 | 7.0 |
| 2-3 years ago | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| More than 3 years ago | 65.0 | 100.0 | 80.0 | 65.0 | 59.0 |

or months. For some men this interval is short; for others it is quite long; while for still others, there is no definite interval — their periodicity is tied to a change in mood or emotion. In this latter case, the spree is induced by events in the man's life such as the anniversary of his divorce, bad luck, or a quarrel with his boss.

The phenomenon of periodic drinking actually exists and appears to be characteristic of a substantial share of Skid Row men. However, it is believed that the figure of 23 percent of all the men who drink probably is too high because many rather steady heavy drinkers reported themselves as periodic drinkers. For example, the "periodicity" reported by many of the men seems to be timed to when they are paid — weekly, bi-weekly, or monthly. Some external circumstances provide ground for some men to consider themselves periodic drinkers when, in fact, they are not. For instance, much of the work on Skid Row, such as railroad work, demands periodicity in drinking; the men can go on a spree only when they are off the job and back in Chicago or some other town. Also, an episode of excessive drinking often induces a spell of sickness which discourages further drinking until the man is at least partially recovered. There are several reasons why a man would want to report himself as a periodic drinker. First, it allows him to feel that he is a more or less helpless victim of circumstances and that the periodic attacks really are not his fault. Second, if found in a very disreputable and drunken state, he can claim that this is not his "normal" condition. Third, there seems to be more status in being a periodic drinker than a common perennial drunk. "Periodic drinking" is, therefore, not a simple uncomplicated type of drinking, and for this

study it proved to be impossible to recognize it as a separate, distinct type in the drinking classification. Instead, those who claimed to be periodic drinkers were classified as moderate, heavy, or derelict, according to their behavior when on a spree, the length of time between sprees, and how much of their total life's energies were oriented toward drinking.

Self-reported periodic drinking is usually heavy drinking in disguise. Only 39 percent of the men classified objectively as heavy drinkers gave that same classification to themselves; about one-half classified themselves as periodic drinkers. Similarly, about one-third of the men who have been classified as alcoholic derelicts made the claim that they are really periodic drinkers.

## I. OVERT ASPECTS OF DRINKING BEHAVIOR

Days per Week of Drinking. — When asked, "About how many days last week did you have some wine or whiskey to drink?" the men responded as shown in Table 12-1-B. Almost one-half of the derelicts and more than one-third of the heavy drinkers reported drinking every day. Yet a surprisingly large percentage of these men (22-25 percent) claimed not to have drunk at all during the preceding week. This is related to the phenomenon of periodicity described above, to having been in jail, or to having been broke.

A large percentage of the men who classified themselves as moderate drinkers were quite active in their drinking. Almost one-fourth drank every day, and almost one-half drank on three or more days during the week.

Amount Drunk during the Preceding Week. — Many heavy drinkers on Skid Row claim to drink fantastically large amounts of liquor. The men were asked to report how much of each type of liquor they drank on an average day of drinking during the week preceding the interview. These amounts were multiplied by the number of days of drinking to get an estimate of the total for the week. A standardized measure of the amount consumed was developed by converting beer, wine, and other beverages into an equivalent number of pints of 80-proof whiskey. Table 12-1-C reports these quantities. This tabulation excludes men who did not drink at all during the week preceding the interview.

More than one-fourth of the alcoholic derelicts who drank claimed to have consumed 10 pints or more of whiskey or its equivalent during the preceding seven days, or nearly one-fifth gallon per day. The average daily consumption for this group was one pint per day. Only about 1 derelict in 8 drank less than two pints during the week.

Fewer heavy drinkers than derelicts drank 10 pints per week, but most of the heavy drinkers (56 percent) drank 3.0 to 9.9 pints per week.

MEN AT WORK IN A SKID ROW TAVERN

A STREET "BOTTLE GANG" IN ACTION. THEY WILL PASS THE BOTTLE AROUND UNTIL IT IS GONE

More than one-third of them claimed to have consumed a pint per day; five pints per week was average.

Even the moderate drinkers tend to consume amounts that by general standards seem to be impressively large; almost one-third of the moderate drinkers had drunk 3 pints or more of whiskey or its equivalent in the preceding week, while 1.5 pints per week was about average. Among the light drinkers, almost one-half had consumed less than half a pint, while almost none drank as much as two pints.

Types of Beverages Usually Drunk (Table 12-1-D). — Contrary to general opinion, beer is the most popular beverage on Skid Row; 42 percent of the men who drink claim to drink beer and almost nothing else. It is cheap, filling, and not rapidly intoxicating. Among light and moderate drinkers, it is by far the major beverage. Whiskey, or whiskey with a beer "chaser," is the next most popular and is chosen by almost 25-30 percent of all light or moderate drinkers. About one-fifth of the moderate drinkers drink wine. Men in the heavy drinking class place more emphasis on whiskey than on beer, and more than one-fourth of the men drink wine at least part of the time.

Chronic alcoholics tend to have a completely different drinking pattern, dominated by the whiskey-beer-wine sequence. When on a spree, while they have plenty of money, they drink whiskey. As their funds decrease, they switch to beer, and at the end when they are almost broke, they switch to wine. About one-fourth of the derelicts reported drinking only wine; they are the "wineheads."

Wine of the cheap quality sold in the Skid Row taverns is not a preferred beverage and is prized primarily only for its intoxicating quality at low cost. The more "gone" the man is in alcoholism, the greater is the reliance on wine as a source of intoxication. For this reason, the term "wino" is synonymous with an advanced state of alcoholic derelict-tion. There is a very popular belief that the wine sold on Skid Row is made from the waste of regular winemaking, that it is not solely a product of natural fermentation, and that the makers add ether, opiates, or other chemicals to give it an added "kick" and to increase the drinker's dependence on it. When a man drinks wine excessively, his appetite tends to disappear; he eats very little, and he may develop skin rashes and symptoms of malnutrition and vitamin deficiency. Many men on the street believe that the switchover from whiskey and/or beer to wine is the beginning of the end. They claim that the cheap wine has physiological effects from which the man almost never recovers.

Comparatively little information was contributed concerning the consumption of alcohol from nonbeverage sources such as hair tonics, canned heat, or industrial alcohol. It is known that some alcoholic derelicts resort to these as sources of drink when nothing else is available, and a few come to prefer them. But on Chicago's Skid Row wine

THE BEER TRUCKER IS KEPT BUSY HAULING IT IN

AND THE POLICE ARE KEPT BUSY HAULING THEM AWAY

is so cheap it competes effectively in price with these substitutes and can be bought or begged more easily than can these nonbeverage items.

How the Men Usually Drink (Table 12-1-E). — A substantial majority of light and moderate drinkers buy their drinks at a bar although about one-fourth of the men of each group regularly buy a bottle of whiskey, beer, or wine at a liquor store and then consume it alone in their room or in an alley. In contrast, only one-third of the alcoholic derelicts buy only at the bar. Of the other two-thirds, one-half drink only from a bottle or mix bar-drinking with bottle-drinking in about equal proportions. It costs less to get intoxicated by bottle-drinking, but the man who does it misses out on the social life of the tavern.

Bottle-Drinking (Table 12-1-F). — The men who reported that they buy a bottle of liquor instead of drinking in a tavern were asked where they go to drink and whether they usually drink alone or with others. Almost all of the light drinkers and moderate drinkers who drink from bottles said they go to their hotel room to drink and usually drink alone. But a very substantial share of the heavy drinkers (33 percent) and of the alcoholic derelicts (45 percent) said they drink on the street, in alleys, behind buildings, or any place handy. A majority of the heavy drinkers and derelicts reported that they usually drink with others. Undoubtedly they were referring to the Skid Row institution of the "bottle gang" formed by several men sharing money (often begged) to get a bottle, which they pass from mouth to mouth until it is finished.

Percent of Income Spent on Drinking (Table 12-1-G). — Each drinking man was asked, "About how much of the money you make do you spend on drinking?" Since this was one of the indexes used to classify drinkers, one should expect the heavy drinkers to spend a large share of their money for alcohol. Among the alcoholic derelicts, 65 percent spend two-thirds or more of their income on drinking. At the other extreme, almost none of the light drinkers spend as much as 15 percent of their income on drinking. Moderate drinkers spend 10-40 percent of their income for alcohol. Most heavy drinkers spend 25-65 percent of their income for drinking; only a small fraction of this group spends more than two-thirds. Thus, on Skid Row it is only the man whom we have classed as an alcoholic derelict who spends almost everything on drinking. Although by the standards of the general public the moderate and heavy drinkers invest a very large share of their meager incomes on alcohol, they have some money left to contribute toward food and room. The derelicts must rely upon the missions for much of their food, and getting a place to sleep is a perennial problem, as has already been observed in Chapter 4.

Early Morning Drinking (Table 12-1-H). — Drinking before breakfast or very shortly after breakfast is commonly regarded as a symptom of complete loss of control of drinking. Less than 5 percent of the light

drinkers confessed doing this, whereas more than 70 percent of the alcoholic derelicts reported doing so "almost every day," "every day when on a spree," or "a few times a week." About one-half of the heavy drinkers admitted this behavior, but almost one-half of those claimed doing so only occasionally.

Periodicity in Drinking (Table 12-1-I). — The question, "Do you have spells when you drink much heavier than at other times?" brought information about periodicity in drinking. Less than 10 percent of the light drinkers and 39 percent of the moderate drinkers said, "Yes," but almost two-thirds of the heavy drinkers reported such periodicity, and even one-half of the derelicts said that their cravings were stronger at some times than at others.

Immediate Causes of Periodic Drinking (Table 12-1-J). — In an effort to get more information about periodic drinking, the men who claimed periodicity were asked what brought on their sprees of drinking. Only about one-fourth of those who reported having periods of extra heavy drinking claimed to be regular periodic drinkers. About one-half claimed that it was linked with periods of mounting tension, depression, worry, or disgust that could be relieved by going on a spree, while one-seventh reported that special occasions such as holidays, celebrations and pay days marked the beginning of the extra heavy drinking.

Time between Periods (Table 12-1-K). — The men who claimed to have a definite periodicity to their drinking (9 percent of all drinkers on Skid Row) were asked to state how long the interval was between sprees. The range reported was 1-5 months, with most of the men reporting 3 months. Among the periodic drinkers who are heavy drinkers, a substantial percentage have periods of 1, 2, 4, or 5 months with only a mild concentration at 3 months. Thus, the drinking behavior of those with fixed periodicity appears to be highly individualistic.

Times Jailed for Drinking (Table 12-1-L). — Between 35,000 and 50,000 arrests for drinking are processed through the Monroe Street Station each year. This is an average of 3 or 4 arrests for every man on Skid Row. Yet 35 percent of all homeless men claim never to have been arrested for drinking. The number of men arrested for drinking is comparatively small, but they are arrested over and over again.

Being arrested for drinking may mean being detained only overnight and released the next morning. A jail sentence is given only during periods of "crackdown," for repeated arrest, or when a man is too drunk or too weakened by drinking to care for himself. Almost two-thirds of the men who drink claim never to have been jailed.

All of the alcoholic derelicts, 80 percent of the heavy drinkers, and about 70 percent of the moderate drinkers have been arrested for drinking. The derelicts are arrested with great regularity, and 20 percent of them have been given 10 jail sentences or more. The average

derelict has had five jail sentences for drinking, in addition to innumerable arrests. Less than one-half of the heavy drinkers have ever served a jail sentence for drinking; one or two jail sentences is the average among those who have ever been jailed.

When Last Arrested for Drinking (Table 12-1-M). — It is the alcoholic derelicts who keep the revolving door spinning at Chicago's Monroe Street Station. On an average, the alcoholic derelict can count on being arrested about once per month on Skid Row. At the time they were interviewed, 29 percent reported being arrested during the past week, and more than 80 percent had been arrested at least once during the past year. Only 1 percent had succeeded in eluding the police for five years.

The average heavy drinker is arrested twice per year, and about 50 percent had been arrested at least once during the year preceding the interview. Moderate drinkers fare much better. They seem to get arrested for drinking about once in each two years, and about 30 percent had been arrested during the year preceding the interview. Even 30 percent of the light drinkers reported having been arrested at some time for drinking; the men on Skid Row complain about false arrest, and these light drinkers presumably were arrested "just to fill the wagon."

From these statistics it is easy to understand how the referee, the judge, the bailiff, the court clerks, the desk sergeant and the patrolmen at the Monroe Street Station and court all get to know the derelicts by name, for the same handful of men shows up week after week.

Times Hospitalized for Drinking (Table 12-1-N). — Although more than three-fourths of all drinking men on Skid Row have never been hospitalized for drinking, about 60 percent of the alcoholic derelicts have been hospitalized at least once, and about 15 percent of them have been hospitalized 3 times or more. Less than 10 percent of heavy drinkers have ever been hospitalized for drinking, and then only once.

D. T.'s: Number of Times and When Experienced (Table 12-1-O, P). — Almost one-half of the alcoholic derelicts had undergone the experience of delirium tremens at least once, and one-sixth had had them 5 times or more. Almost none of the moderate drinkers and only 14 percent of the heavy drinkers had experienced an attack. Among the alcoholic derelicts who had had D. T.'s, 35 percent had had an attack during the year preceding the interview.

## II. HOW HOMELESS MEN INTERPRET THEIR DRINKING

Why Homeless Men Drink (Tables 12-2 and 12-3-A). — At the height of the interview, after rapport had been firmly established, the subject of drinking was introduced in a nonthreatening way by asking the follow-

ing question: "Why do you suppose so many men (on Skid Row) drink so much?" This was probed persistently until the man's views were fully known. Later, after the conversation had been turned toward the exploration of the man's own drinking behavior and after that behavior had been rather fully described (materials reported in Part I, above), he was asked the question, "Why do you suppose you drink?" This procedure gave two sets of answers to the question of why homeless men drink — one in which the men reported for all of the men on Skid Row generally and one in which they reported for themselves only. Theoretically, if the men answered both questions fully and correctly, the distribution of replies to the two questions would be nearly identical. Differences between the two distributions reflect self-diagnosis versus diagnosis of others, or perception of how one's own drinking problem differs from the average.

Table 12-2. WHY SKID ROW MEN DRINK: REFERENCE TO OTHERS
(Percent of men mentioning)

| Reasons for drinking | Total | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| DON'T KNOW WHY | 8 | 12 | 12 | 4 | 8 | 5 |
| ADDICTION | 34 | 36 | 35 | 35 | 29 | 32 |
| ESCAPE OR SUBSTITUTE FOR PRESENT REALITY | | | | | | |
| Drink to forget troubles, "drown sorrows," general | 43 | 50 | 36 | 45 | 50 | 41 |
| Drink because of family (marital) troubles | 26 | 17 | 23 | 24 | 33 | 31 |
| Drink because of family (other) troubles | 10 | 10 | 8 | 11 | 11 | 9 |
| Drink to forget mistakes, bad judgment, wrongdoing | 1 | ... | ... | * | * | 2 |
| Drink to forget present situation, Skid Row environment | 7 | 3 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 12 |
| Drink to ease physical pain | ... | ... | 1 | ... | * | 1 |
| Drink to ease feeling of discouragement, hopelessness, low morale | 16 | 15 | 16 | 18 | 18 | 14 |
| ENVIRONMENT-FAMILY BACKGROUND-EARLY CHILDHOOD | 7 | 18 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 8 |
| GUILT FEELINGS, SUBSTITUTION, OR ATONEMENT FOR FAILURE OR WRONGDOING | | | | | | |
| Drink to punish themselves for past real or imagined wrongdoings | 4 | 4 | ... | 2 | 35 | 5 |
| Drink to ease sense of failure, disappointment at not achieving ambition or fulfilling expectations of others | 7 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 13 | 10 |
| Drink because it makes them feel adequate, successful, feel big, important, helps hide weaknesses-drinking makes them feel brave, extrovertive; when sober they are insecure, shy, cowardly, weak | 10 | 2 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 14 |
| Drink because unable to accept adult responsibility (emotionally immature) | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 18 |
| COMPANIONSHIP | | | | | | |
| Drink to escape loneliness | 22 | 14 | 12 | 21 | 25 | 28 |
| Drink to be sociable, to be accepted, to associate with friends | 22 | 29 | 20 | 20 | 19 | 17 |
| RECREATION | | | | | | |
| Drink because they like the feeling of being intoxicated | 20 | 27 | 29 | 16 | 6 | 14 |
| Drink because it is a pastime, a way of having a good time | 44 | 23 | 42 | 53 | 33 | 41 |
| SUBSTITUTE FOR FAMILY LIFE | 10 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 14 | 11 |
| RELIGIOUS | 4 | 12 | 2 | 2 | 7 | ... |

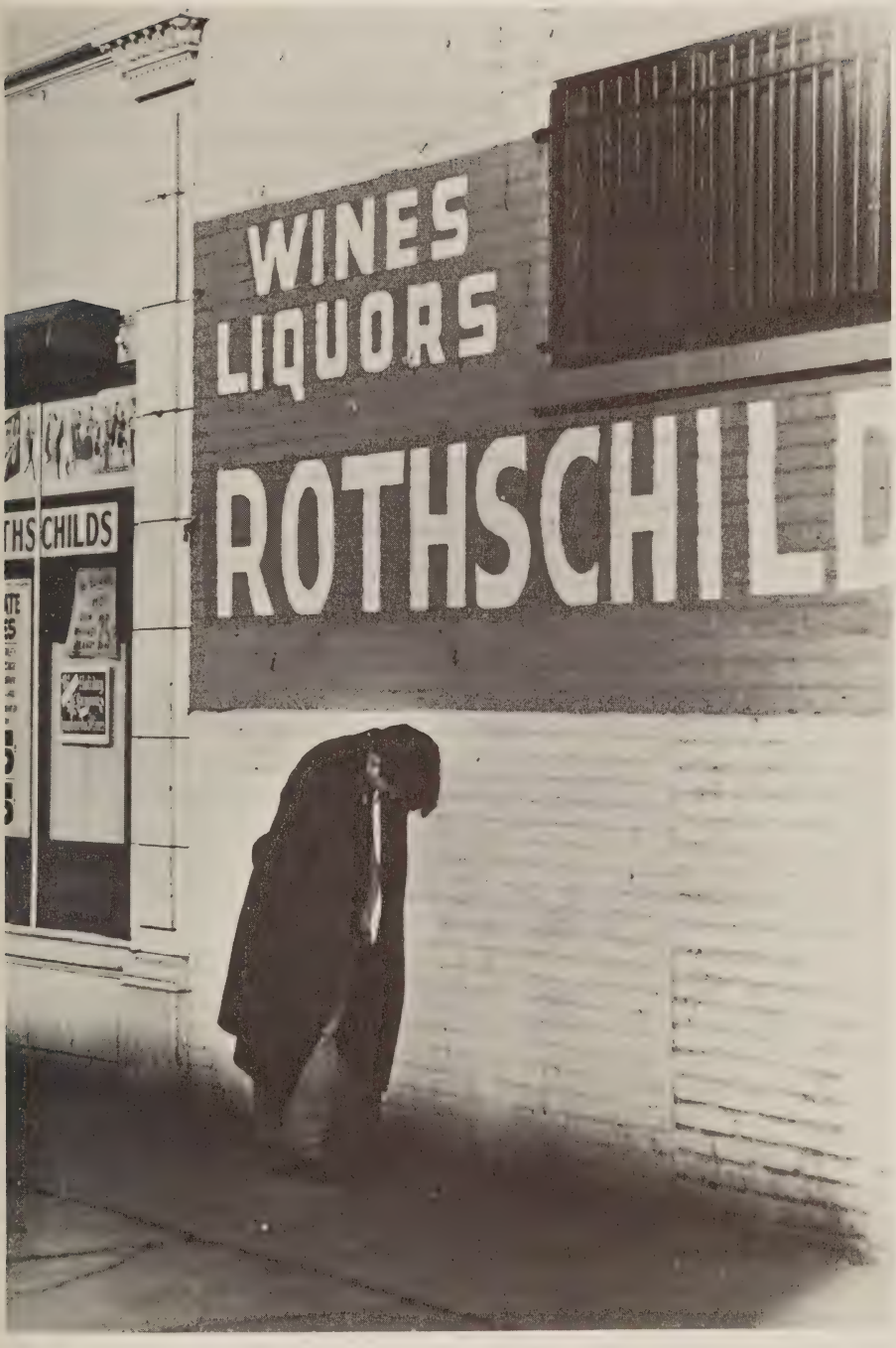
*Less than 0.5 percent

Nineteen different hypotheses of why Skid Row men drink had been drawn up and were tested by these data by noting whether or not the men spontaneously gave reasons that would support one or more of these hypotheses. Tables 12-2 and 12-3-A present the data assembled from these two sets of inquiries, cross-tabulated by the drinking classification of the men. Since each respondent could give several reasons (support more than one hypothesis), the percentages of these tables add to more than 100 percent. One of the noteworthy findings of these tables

Table 12-3. WHY SKID ROW MEN DRINK AND FEELINGS AFTER DRINKING: REFERENCE TO SELF (Percent of men mentioning)

| Reasons for drinking | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| DON'T KNOW WHY | 6 | 13 | 4 | 2 | 9 |
| ADDICTION | 26 | 16 | 12 | 27 | 43 |
| ESCAPE FROM OR SUBSTITUTE FOR PRESENT REALITY | | | | | |
| Drink to forget troubles, "drown sorrows," general. | 41 | 38 | 41 | 41 | 43 |
| Drink because of family (marital) troubles | 10 | ... | 7 | 15 | 12 |
| Drink because of family (other) troubles | 3 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 5 |
| Drink to forget mistakes, bad judgment, wrongdoings | 4 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 5 |
| Drink to forget present situation, Skid Row environment | 9 | 9 | 9 | 7 | 13 |
| Drink to ease physical pain | 5 | 17 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Drink to ease feelings of discouragement, low morale | 24 | 17 | 27 | 28 | 20 |
| ENVIRONMENT-FAMILY BACKGROUND-EARLY CHILDHOOD | 6 | 3 | ... | 10 | 7 |
| GUILT FEELINGS, SUBSTITUTION OR ATONEMENT FOR FAILURE OR WONRDOING | | | | | |
| Drink to punish myself for past real or imagined wrongdoings | 1 | ... | ... | 2 | ... |
| Drink to ease sense of failure, disappointment at not achieving ambition or fulfilling expectations of others | 4 | * | 3 | 5 | 13 |
| Drink because it makes him feel adequate, successful, feel big, important, helps hide weaknesses-drinking makes him feel brave, extrovertive, when sober he is insecure, shy, cowardly, weak | 8 | 4 | 1 | 15 | 28 |
| Drink because unable to accept adult responsibility (emotionally immature) | 1 | ... | ... | 2 | 4 |
| COMPANIONSHIP | | | | | |
| Drink to escape loneliness. Lonesome and people in bars will talk to him | 7 | 4 | 7 | 29 | 12 |
| Drink to be sociable, to be accepted, to associate with friends (no mention of loneliness) | 21 | 25 | 25 | 15 | 14 |
| RECREATION | | | | | |
| Drink because I like the feeling of being intoxicated. It is fun to get drunk; like the taste of liquor; like the effects; like to get drunk and have a good time, ease tensions | 44 | 49 | 49 | 30 | 49 |
| Drink because it is a pastime, a way of having a good time. (Emphasis upon the recreation, less upon feeling of drunkenness) | 30 | 31 | 40 | 19 | 28 |
| SUBSTITUTE FOR FAMILY LIFE | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 | ... |
| RELIGIOUS - Sin, temptation | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| DO YOU FEEL GUILTY OR SORRY AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN DRINKING? | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Don't drink that much | 13 | 30 | 8 | 3 | 1 |
| Very acute guilt feelings | 13 | 1 | 9 | 24 | 27 |
| Feels guilty, but not acute | 22 | 10 | 25 | 24 | 39 |
| Has no guilt feelings about drinking | 36 | 51 | 38 | 25 | 16 |
| Feels disgusted at wasting money, but not guilty | 10 | 5 | 13 | 12 | 9 |
| Feels disgusted at getting ill, making a fool of himself | 7 | 3 | 6 | 12 | 8 |

*Less than 0.5 percent




A YOUNG MAN WHO HAS JUST STAGGERED OUT OF THE TAVERN

is that 6 percent of the men said they did not know why Skid Row men drink or why they themselves drink.

The nineteen hypotheses of reasons for drinking, together with the totals of the responses given by the men, reporting first for others and then for themselves, are as follows:

| Hypotheses | Percent of men mentioning: Why others drink | Why I drink |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Drink to forget troubles, to drown sorrows — general | 29 | 41 |
| 2. Drink because of a craving, an addiction, "can't help it" | 22 | 26 |
| 3. Drink because of past marital troubles | 17 | 10 |
| 4. Drink to have a good time; it is a pastime | 17 | 30 |
| 5. Drink to ease feeling of discouragement, hopelessness, low morale | 11 | 24 |
| 6. Drink to be sociable, to be accepted, to associate with friends | 8 | 21 |
| 7. Drink because of the pleasant feeling of being intoxicated | 8 | 44 |
| 8. Drink to escape loneliness | 8 | 7 |
| 9. Drink because of family (other than marital) troubles | 7 | 3 |
| 10. Drink because of early childhood background | 5 | 6 |
| 11. Drink to forget, blot out, present Skid Row environment | 4 | 9 |
| 12. Drink to feel more brave, extrovertive, secure, adequate, stronger than when sober | 4 | 8 |
| 13. Drink as a substitute for family life | 4 | 3 |
| 14. Drink to ease sense of failure, disappointment at not achieving ambitions or fulfilling expectations of others | 3 | 4 |
| 15. Drink because of sin, temptation, evil forces (religious interpretation) | 2 | + |
| 16. Drink as a punishment for past wrongdoings | 1 | 1 |
| 17. Drink to forget mistakes, bad judgment, wrongdoing | 1 | 4 |
| 18. Drink to ease physical pain | + | 5 |
| 19. Drink because unable to accept adult responsibility (emotionally immature) | + | 1 |

Note: A "+" denotes some response but less than 0.5 percent.

If one could say that a really important hypothesis is one that is mentioned spontaneously by 10 percent or more of the men, either with reference to others or to themselves, then only items 1-7 represent important causes of Skid Row drinking as interpreted by the men. The data give minor support (5-9 percent mentioned) to hypotheses 8-13, and there was almost no support (less than 5 percent mentioned) for hypotheses 14-19. The fact that the men do not give strong support to the last propositions is no proof that they are not valid. It may mean only that the men are unable to be objective enough or are not perceptive enough to discern their own motives or those of their fellows. For the present analysis, it is useful to know that these explanations are not a significant part of their view of the problem.

The above listing refers to the views of all the men on Skid Row, including teetotalers and light drinkers. By confining our attention only to the propositions supported by 10 percent or more of the alcoholic derelicts and heavy drinkers, nine of the propositions emerge as being important, as the following summary shows:

| | Why others drink | | Why I drink | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hypotheses | Heavy drinkers | Alcoholic derelicts | Heavy drinkers | Alcoholic derelicts |
| Drink to forget troubles, drown sorrows, general . . . | 50 | 41 | 41 | 43 |
| Drink to have a good time; it is a pastime . . . . . | 33 | 41 | 19 | 28 |
| Drink because of a craving, addiction . . . . . | 29 | 32 | 27 | 43 |
| Drink because of past marital troubles. . . . . | 33 | 31 | 15 | 12 |
| Drink to escape loneliness. . . | 25 | 28 | 29 | 12 |
| Drink to be sociable, to be accepted . . . . . | 19 | 17 | 15 | 14 |
| Drink to ease feeling of discouragement, hopelessness, low morale . . . . . | 18 | 14 | 28 | 20 |
| Drink because of pleasant feeling of intoxication . . . . | 6 | 14 | 30 | 49 |
| Drink to feel more adequate, secure . . . . . | 8 | 14 | 15 | 28 |

These nine reasons, seven of which are supported by Skid Row men as a whole, viewed a little more abstractly, allow the inference that Skid Row men recognize four major types of forces as "explaining"

their behavior. These, ranked in order of apparent importance to the men, are:

| Types of forces | Percent: Why I drink — Heavy drinkers | Alcoholic derelicts |
|---|---|---|
| Drinking to escape reality — to drown troubles, ease feelings of discouragement, because of past marital troubles, to feel more adequate . . . | 99 | 103 |
| Drinking for recreation — as a pastime, a way to have a good time, because of a liking for the taste or effects of alcohol . . . . . | 49 | 77 |
| Drinking because of addiction — "hooked by alcohol" . . . . . | 27 | 43 |
| Drinking for companionship — to be sociable, to be accepted, to have friends, escape loneliness . | 44 | 26 |

Note: The above percents are merely the sums of the responses and do not measure the percentage of men who responded, for some men gave two or more responses classed in the same, broad category.

"Drinking to forget trouble" (especially marital trouble) is the dominant theme of Skid Row drinking, especially in explaining why others drink. The responses of these Skid Row men indicate that the taverns are not patronized by men filled with the zest for living and enjoying their present freedom, but with men trying to anaesthetize themselves to the point of blotting out the present and memories of the past, and trying to substitute for it a hazy, unreal, and temporary world devoid of trouble. A turn of bad luck, a reprimand from the boss, an unkind comment by a friend, or even a TV show that reminds the man of his estranged wife or his current problems can launch him on a search for oblivion. Escapist drinking is only moderately less prevalent among light drinkers and moderate drinkers than among the alcoholics; it is a fundamental self-justification for Skid Row drinking. It would seem to be important in attempting treatment of these men to appreciate this morbid joylessness with which a very substantial group of the homeless men apparently begins drinking sprees.

Many medical experts do not believe that there is a genuine addiction element in alcoholism, comparable to drug addiction. Whether this is true or false, medically speaking, the men themselves regard addiction (or "quasi addiction") as a strong root of their problem. Their repeated unsuccessful efforts to stop drinking are regarded as evidence that

PROBLEM: HOW TO GET TO THE CUBICLE WITHOUT GETTING ARRESTED OR JACKROLLED

TWO MEN TRY TO GET THEIR DRUNKEN BUDDY OUT OF THE STREET

A DRUNKEN MAN TRIES VAINLY TO GET BACK ON HIS FEET

IN SOME TAVERNS THERE ARE LADIES WHO WILL LET YOU BUY THEM A DRINK

addiction exists. Men who are attempting to stop drinking may have painful withdrawal symptoms and "the shakes," with cravings for drink so strong that they will freely steal, sometimes smash liquor store windows, or beg piteously from other drinkers. Whether or not addiction is a physiological fact, many believe they have been "hooked" by alcohol. Many speak of drink as an alternative to dope. Often a man will ask to be sentenced to jail to "get dried out" (break the chain of addictive drinking). Alcoholic derelicts emphasize the addictive craze for drink much more than heavy drinkers.

A substantial percentage of the homeless men did not attempt to hide the fact that they frankly like the feeling of being intoxicated, or that they regard drinking as a pleasant pastime and a good investment of money in recreation. A very substantial share of the men gave both this explanation and the "drinking to drown sorrows" explanation. At first thought these seem to be incompatible, but as a pleasurable experience worthy of pursuit for its own sake, the appeal of alcohol is "double-barreled" — it drowns the troublesome past and creates a euphoric present.

Drinking for companionship, to be accepted, to have friends, or to escape loneliness are factors primarily in the drinking of light, moderate, and heavy drinkers; they are much less important in the self-explanation of the alcoholic derelicts. For Skid Row as a whole, it plays a significant role. If it is true, as the men claim, that they dislike each other, perhaps Skid Row drinking performs some of the sociological functions which the cocktail party performs in ordinary society.

Guilt Feelings about Drinking (Table 12-3-B). — When asked, "Do you ever feel guilty or sorry after you have been drinking?" about one-half

Table 12-4. THE SKID ROW ENVIRONMENT AS A FACTOR IN DRINKING: SELF-REPORTED (Percent of men mentioning)

| Reason for drinking | Total | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Some men drink because there is nothing else to do | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Disagree | 59 | 72 | 59 | 59 | 59 | 50 |
| Agree | 35 | 21 | 31 | 37 | 39 | 45 |
| Don't know, neither agree nor disagree | 6 | 27 | 10 | 4 | 2 | 5 |
| Some men drink because of the environment--so many taverns | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Disagree | 69 | 75 | 72 | 69 | 64 | 66 |
| Agree | 26 | 17 | 24 | 26 | 30 | 31 |
| Don't know, neither agree nor disagree | 5 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 3 |
| Some men drink in order to have friends | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Disagree | 60 | 57 | 68 | 60 | 53 | 53 |
| Agree | 34 | 35 | 28 | 32 | 38 | 44 |
| Don't know, neither agree nor disagree | 6 | 8 | 4 | 8 | 9 | 3 |

of the heavy drinkers and chronic alcoholics confessed having guilt feelings after an episode of drunkenness, while the other one-half reported no such feelings. Many of those who did not feel guilt described feelings of self-disgust at having wasted money, gotten sick, or looked foolish. One-fourth of all of these men reported their guilt feelings in language which permitted the feeling to be coded as "acute" or "strong." Several of the men reported severe depression after drinking, especially after failure of an attempt to stop drinking by joining Alcoholics Anonymous or another program. Many have thoughts of suicide or experience hopeless discouragement after they sober up. Only one-fourth or less of the heavy drinkers and derelicts reported no particular feelings of guilt or disgust with themselves after drinking.

The Skid Row Environment as a Factor. — It has often been said that the Skid Row environment is itself a major factor in causing excessive drinking. In order to obtain information on three of the claims mentioned most often concerning the effect of Skid Row, the following specific inquiries were made:

1. "Some men say they drink so much because there's nothing else to do. Do you agree or disagree with that?"
2. "Some men say they drink so much because of the environment — that is, with so many taverns here, it's hard not to drink a lot. Do you agree or disagree with that?"
3. "Some say that you can't have very many friends here unless you spend a lot of time in the bars and buy a drink for people when you have money. Do you agree or disagree with that?"

These questions were asked of each man unless he spontaneously volunteered the answer, so that a response was obtained from everyone. Table 12-4 summarizes the results.

Skid Row men rejected all three of these propositions overwhelmingly. The teetotalers and light drinkers were especially emphatic in disagreeing with these hypothetical statements. Even a majority of the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts denied all three. The greatest unanimity was with respect to the effect of taverns; they claim it is the drinking that causes the taverns, not the reverse.

Yet from 30 to 45 percent of the heavy drinkers and about one-fourth of the teetotalers and light drinkers did support these claims. It must therefore be admitted that these ideas are not entirely inappropriate; Skid Row may (and probably does) influence greatly the frequency of drinking and the amount drunk. The men make it abundantly clear, however, that closing the taverns, furnishing alternative forms of recreation, and providing other avenues for making friends might help to mitigate the drinking problem, but that they would not strike at the root. These solutions are undoubtedly an important part of a total pro-

gram for controlling alcoholism, but they are not sufficient alone — at least according to the opinion of the homeless men.

Age at Which Drinking Began (Table 12-5-A). — Among the chronic alcoholics of Skid Row, the drinking problem began in youth or early adulthood. In 80 percent of the cases heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts had started their uncontrolled drinking before their thirty-fifth birthday. Between one-fourth and one-third of them were heavy drinkers before the age of 20. In only an insignificant share of cases did heavy drinking start after age 45.

It has been postulated that as a man's physical and sexual vigor declines, there is a tendency to use drink as a substitute for or to create the illusion of youth. Since Skid Row men already have about ten years of heavy drinking behind them when they reach the stage of declining virility, this explanation does not account for their drinking.

It has also been suggested that the "mama's boy" who does not marry, but faithfully stays at home with his parents until they die, starts to drink because he is middle-aged and disorganized, with no wife or family to guide him. There are such "boys" on Skid Row, but many of them are not uncontrolled drinkers, and some were drinking rather heavily while caring for their mothers. Since the onset of drinking after age 45 is rare among men on Skid Row, the explanation that alcoholism is caused by the death of a wife after children are grown does not apply to these men.

Whatever the forces are that underlie Skid Row alcoholism, they very obviously exert their pressure and achieve their result well before the onset of middle age.

How Drinking Developed (Table 12-5-B, C). — The question, "How did your heavy drinking develop? (Please tell me about it; what happened to start the heavy drinking?)" provoked very few dramatic stories. Almost 9 out of 10 heavy drinkers or chronic alcoholics said they just gradually drifted into it and that their drinking developed almost without their awareness until it became uncontrolled. Only 5 percent claimed to have had a rather sudden urge to drink heavily at the start. A majority regarded it as merely a harmless, pleasant pastime at first, although more than one-third said they used it from the beginning as a means of relief, escape, or relaxation from troubles, worry, or tension. Only a few claimed to have been just curious or to have drunk solely to demonstrate manliness. If this description is correct, the first few weeks or months of drinking were not dissimilar from usual social drinking. However, the fact that heavy drinking was firmly established at the early ages, as just described, suggests that the "gradual drifting" into heavy drinking may have started after brief contact (perhaps for only a few months) with liquor.

Occasion for First Drinking (Table 12-5-D). — There were no unique situations that could be held responsible for the start of heavy drinking. Some men started while in military service, others by drinking with fellow workers, some by patronizing their local neighborhood tavern, and some at private social affairs — home parties. Almost one-third claimed that a definite crisis, such as a quarrel with their wife or separation from their wife was related to the beginning of frequent drinking.

Problems Connected with Heavy Drinking (Table 12-5-E). — The question, "Were there any especially tough problems that started your drinking, or did you just drift into it?" openly invited the alcoholic to excuse his behavior and project it onto fate. Instead, more than one-half (56-61 percent) of the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts frankly said there was no particular crisis or problem associated with the onset of heavy drinking. Of those who did mention a problem, "woman trouble" received first mention, with 18-24 percent of the men giving it as a reason. Loss of a job, loss of a parent, family troubles (nonmarital), tension resulting from military service, or ordinary anxiety due to feelings of inadequacy were mentioned also. If these data are biased, it must be in the direction of exaggerating the role of crises in heavy drinking. If Skid Row men are "drowning sorrows," these are primarily sorrows that developed after the onset of drinking, not sorrows that caused the drinking initially, for most of them claim to have had no such problems. Therefore, even though escape from reality may be a major cause of current drinking on Skid Row, by the men's own testimonies very little of their early heavy drinking was prompted by this desire. Apparently, heavy drinking was a pleasant, sought-after experience creating troubles which then reinforced drinking. This is a point of considerable importance in developing a theory of alcoholism. "Drinking for fun" seemingly came first; "drinking to drown trouble" came later.

Reaction of Family to Heavy Drinking (Table 12-5-F). — Most heavy drinkers came from conventional families who disapproved of their excessive drinking and tried to stop it. When asked, "How did your family act about your heavy drinking?" 70 percent of the heavy drinkers said their families disapproved, and only 12 percent said the family did not care. Unfortunately, the course followed by most of the disapproving families was not one of patience, sympathy, understanding, and help. Instead, according to the men, two-thirds of them nagged, argued, and threatened to desert.

Reaction of Friends and Neighbors (Table 12-5-G). — Very little community social control appears to have been applied as the man's heavy drinking developed, for 70 percent of the heavy drinkers and derelicts reported either complete indifference or an actual tolerance of heavy drinking by friends and neighbors. Of course, the "friends and neigh-

Table 12-5. SELF-REPORTING ABOUT ONSET OF DRINKING AND TREATMENTS TAKEN (Percent of men mentioning)

| Response | Total | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Moderate | Heavy | Derelict |
| A. AGE AT WHICH HEAVY DRINKING FIRST BEGAN | | | | |
| Less than 20 years | 28 | 25 | 25 | 33 |
| 20-34 years | 53 | 55 | 55 | 49 |
| 35-44 years | 15 | 15 | 17 | 12 |
| 45-54 years | 3 | 5 | 2 | 5 |
| 55 years and over | 1 | ... | ... | 2 |
| B. HOW DID YOUR DRINKING DEVELOP? | | | | |
| Gradually drifted into it. Started with occasional drinking, but it gradually got heavier and heavier until could no longer control | 86 | 90 | 84 | 86 |
| Almost from the first had a hunger, a craze, an uncontrollable drive to get drunk, to drink until intoxicated, until pass out | 5 | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| Developed a liking for the feeling of being drunk, enjoyed the feeling of being intoxicated as a result of crisis, trouble | 9 | 5 | 11 | 7 |
| Other | ... | ... | 1 | ... |
| C. MAN'S ATTITUDE TOWARD DRINKING WHEN FIRST BEGAN | | | | |
| A harmless pastime, pleasant social activity | 52 | 60 | 55 | 45 |
| Was curious about its effects | 5 | 15 | ... | 6 |
| Felt it was a way to demonstrate he was manly, grown up | 12 | ... | 13 | 16 |
| Was a way of showing independence from his family | 2 | ... | 5 | ... |
| Helped forget troubles--means of escape | 37 | 33 | 39 | 35 |
| D. OCCASIONS FOR FIRST DRINKING | | | | |
| Work | 13 | 12 | 12 | 16 |
| Recreation in commercial establishment, taverns | 23 | 17 | 27 | 19 |
| Private social affairs--cocktail parties, parties in homes, dating girls who drink | 20 | 17 | 21 | 20 |
| Crisis, trouble | 32 | 31 | 32 | 32 |
| Military service | 18 | 29 | 12 | 22 |
| E. PROBLEMS CONNECTED WITH HEAVY DRINKING | | | | |
| No special problems | 59 | 61 | 56 | 61 |
| Loss of job | 8 | 13 | 11 | 3 |
| Death of parents | 5 | 9 | 4 | 4 |
| Wife unfaithful | 6 | ... | 6 | 6 |
| Other marital troubles | 13 | 3 | 16 | 12 |
| Other family troubles (non-marital) | 3 | 5 | 3 | 2 |
| Thwarted ambitions, unable to realize goal | 2 | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| Fears, tensions connected with military service | 5 | 9 | 6 | 2 |
| Fears, tension, insecurity, inferiority feeling | 10 | 9 | 9 | 13 |
| F. HOW DID YOUR FAMILY ACT? | | | | |
| Disliked it, argued, nagged, threatened to desert | 33 | 42 | 33 | 29 |
| Disliked, tried to help me, showed sympathy, patience, tolerance | 15 | 15 | 13 | 18 |
| Disliked, no mention of attitude toward problem | 22 | 21 | 20 | 25 |
| Family did not care, tolerant of heavy drinking | 12 | 10 | 12 | 13 |
| Family did not know | 18 | 13 | 21 | 16 |
| G. HOW DID FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS ACT? | | | | |
| Disliked it, argued, nagged, threatened | 9 | ... | 11 | 9 |
| Disliked it, tried to help, showed sympathy, patience, tolerance | 5 | 11 | 1 | 9 |
| Disliked, no mention of attitude toward problem | 14 | 15 | 11 | 17 |
| Did not care, tolerant of heavy drinking, did not know | 70 | 70 | 76 | 62 |
| No friends or neighbors or family to react | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 |

Table 12-5. SELF-REPORTING ABOUT ONSET OF DRINKING AND TREATMENTS TAKEN (Percent of men mentioning) (Continued)

| Response | Total | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| H. HOW DID BOSS, PEOPLE AT WORK REACT TO DRINKING? | | | | |
| Fired me, was very intolerant | 12 | 4 | 16 | 11 |
| Sent me home to sober up, gave me several chances, (perhaps followed by quit, or fire) | 16 | 15 | 17 | 16 |
| Tried to help, tried to advise, get treatment; sympathetic | 7 | 6 | 5 | 11 |
| Boss did not care, tolerant of heavy drinking; didn't know | 41 | 33 | 42 | 44 |
| No information regarding boss; no boss | 23 | 42 | 20 | 17 |
| I. DID YOU TRY TO TAKE ANY TREATMENTS FOR DRINKING? | | | | |
| Have taken no treatments | 66 | 84 | 75 | 50 |
| Tried AA | 20 | 8 | 19 | 25 |
| Tried Salvation Army | 5 | ... | 3 | 9 |
| Tried medical, psychiatric treatment | 18 | 8 | 8 | 34 |
| Tried other treatment | 1 | ... | ... | 3 |

bors" were not necessarily those of the home environment, but often were those of the deteriorated neighborhoods in which the man was living, or the gang with which he was associating.

Reaction of Employers (Table 12-5-H). — Employers as a whole appear to have been quite lenient toward heavy drinking, for in only 12 percent of the cases were they reported as having been intolerant enough to fire the man outright. In at least a quarter of the cases they seem to have given the man several chances and actively tried to help him master his drinking. In 40 percent of the cases the boss was said not to have cared or else not to have known of the heavy drinking.

Efforts to Conquer Drinking (Tables 12-5-I and 12-6). — Most of the heavy drinkers on Skid Row have made an effort to conquer drinking, and many of them have succeeded. One would expect that those who do manage to master this problem leave Skid Row, so that only those are left behind who have failed in their efforts or who have never tried. One-third of all of the alcoholic derelicts and one-fourth of the heavy drinkers have joined Alcoholics Anonymous, and 11-14 percent have been in the Salvation Army program. One-third of the alcoholic derelicts have been given medical treatment for alcoholism. Many have been under treatment for alcoholism at Manteno State Hospital, veterans' hospitals, and private treatment centers in Chicago and other cities. From these data (plus the data on guilt feelings) it seems clear that these men want to break the drinking habit and have sincerely tried. Of the men who had joined a program 11 percent of the alcoholic derelicts and 29 percent of the heavy drinkers reported that the program helped them, while 30-35 percent said that it did not help. In addition, a very substantial proportion declared that the program helped them at the time, even if not permanently. One could have expected

much less favorable reaction, on the assumption that the successful men had migrated elsewhere.

The survey found that 1 alcoholic derelict in 9 and 1 heavy drinker in 5 was in a program to try to conquer his alcoholism at the time of the interview. Several of the men here classed as heavy drinkers or alcoholic derelicts had been in one of these programs for only a few days or a few weeks and could not be classed as teetotalers because of the high probability that they would return to drinking.

Reformed ("Dry") Alcoholics on Skid Row. — Each teetotaler was asked if he had ever been a heavy drinker; 29 percent of the teetotalers reported in the affirmative. This implies that in all of the Skid Row area there is a total of 530 former heavy drinkers who have managed to master their drinking. From the sample of interviews it is believed that of these cases a great many are genuine instances of recovery from severe alcoholism. Some cases were of men who had stopped drinking only a short time previously. Most experts believe a man must stay "dry" for at least three months before he ceases to need almost daily help and encouragement, and that at least six months to one year must

Table 12-6. PROGRAMS JOINED IN ORDER TO STOP DRINKING
(Percent of men mentioning)

| Response | Total | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| HAVE YOU EVER JOINED ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS, SALVATION ARMY, AND OTHER PROGRAMS TO STOP DRINKING? | | | | | | |
| Never joined any program | 80 | 88 | 96 | 89 | 68 | 44 |
| Joined Alcoholics Anonymous | 14 | 10 | 4 | 7 | 25 | 32 |
| Joined Salvation Army program | 5 | 1 | 1 | 4 | 11 | 14 |
| Joined Christian Industrial League, other religious programs | 1 | 1 | * | ... | 1 | 2 |
| Medical treatment program | 6 | ... | ... | 1 | 6 | 33 |
| (Note: Many men have joined two or more programs) | | | | | | |
| IF JOINED SOME PROGRAM: (Most favorable response) | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Program helped | 32 | 78 | 75 | 52 | 29 | 11 |
| Program did not help | 28 | 22 | ... | 17 | 30 | 35 |
| Trying it at present time | 13 | ... | 10 | 5 | 20 | 11 |
| Program helped at the time | 27 | ... | 15 | 26 | 21 | 43 |

*Less than 0.5 percent

elapse before the danger of a return to heavy drinking is largely passed. Relapses after even longer periods of being "dry" are not uncommon. On the assumption that Skid Row loses most of its successful reformed alcoholics, this suggests that the success rate of Alcoholics Anonymous, Salvation Army, and other programs in this area is substantially higher than most observers realize.

It was believed that these men who had been able to stop drinking, even though forced to continue to live in the Skid Row environment,

might provide some very important clues that could be built into a general program for the treatment of alcoholism. Accordingly, each of them was asked, "How did you stop?" and "Who helped you and how did they help?" The replies given by the teetotalers are as follows:

| | Percent Teetotalers |
|---|---|
| Had no help, did it through own will power, not sick | 59 |
| Became very ill, stopped voluntarily | 16 |
| Stopped with help of AA program | 16 |
| Stopped with help of Salvation Army program | ... |
| Stopped with help of other religious program | 4 |
| Stopped with help of psychological, medical treatments | 4 |
| Other | ... |

The results are both encouraging and discouraging. The discouraging aspect of these figures is that the men give such a small share of credit to the established programs. Only one-fourth gave credit to a regular alcoholism treatment program. Of these, Alcoholics Anonymous was given by far the most credit, with religious programs, psychological programs, and medical treatment being given very little credit. An accident or a critical illness related to drinking has "cured" almost as many cases of alcoholism as have the formal programs — the knowledge that further drinking may mean early death deters many. The encouraging aspect of these figures is that apparently the men are able to reflect upon their problem, to resolve not to drink, and to keep that resolve. (This may well happen after an unsuccessful effort with AA or another program.) In 59 percent of the cases the man simply "cured himself" by making a resolve and sticking to it. There is a possibility that this process of self-help can be stimulated and strengthened within the Skid Row environment. This possibility might be explored by "invading" Skid Row with well-planned experimental programs of information and help.

This chapter concludes with extensive quotations from the interviews with these men which contribute to our understanding regarding the successful conquest of alcoholism.

## III. QUOTATIONS ON REASONS WHY SKID ROW MEN DRINK

Case 002: 55-year-old unemployed man. (Calls himself a periodic drinker. Has been out of work for more than a year.) Why do you suppose you drink? I figure I drink to make me a little bit happy. I have a lot of troubles. My mother died. I have no home. So I drink to forget. That makes me feel peppy. Gives me ideas to do things. I walk around and get talkative and meet friends. I'd talk to the President of the United States when I drink.

Case 008: 39-year-old man, did not work last week because he was drinking. (Calls himself a periodic drinker.) Why do men on Skid Row drink so much? They're lonesome. That's the reason I drink. I walk around and why, hell, you got no other thing to do. You get mad at something. Even when you are working. I just get mad and say, to hell with it. You don't get no pleasure out of drinking. Did you ever see a drinking man have any fun? Hell, no. You can't. You just drink to drink. If I take one drink, that's it. I can't explain it. That's all. I'll go 'til I go broke. I just can't cut it off. I just sling them down 'til I go broke. I wish I could quit. When I get lonely, I get to drinking. How do you feel after drinking? I feel like hell. I feel no good. I feel guilty. Anybody that would just piss off a couple of hundred dollars should feel sorry and guilty. Started drinking when I was 16, but I really started to drink heavy when I was in Panama in the service. No, I just got a little worse a little at a time. There were no special events. I've never tried any treatments for it. I've tried religion, but I just can't seem to get saved. I was at Harbor Light about two weeks this fall. They got me a job. I got drunk and ruined it.

Case 010: 57-year-old man on welfare. (Calls himself a heavy drinker. Has poor health: gastric ulcer. Is crippled in one foot, blind in one eye, and almost blind in the other.) Why do you suppose you drink? I like to drink. I like the taste of it. No, that's it. I like the taste of it, so I drink. I have no other reasons. I have no other problems. (Declares that he drinks seven days a week and averages 7 or 8 pints of wine a day. Says he started to drink at sea.) When we went on shore, everybody drank. So did I. I kept on drinking. Have done it all my life. I've been a heavy drinker all my life. Drank just as much as I do now. Nothing happened to start me drinking, only going to sea. I just drifted into it. I took a liking to it, so I kept it up. (This man has been hospitalized in Manteno State Hospital in an effort to cure his drinking. Has been arrested about 25 times for drinking. Has been hospitalized 9 times. Has had an attack of D.T.'s on three different occasions in the last ten years.)

Case 019: 49-year-old roofer, making more than $3.00 per hour. (Calls himself a heavy drinker.) Well, I guess I'm as heavy as you can

get and still work. Why do men on Skid Row drink? Lots of them are too ashamed to be around decent people. I know I am. I wouldn't go around my people when I'm drinking. Lots of them are outcasts, have no relatives. Some of their consciences might hurt them for things they done in the past. Why do you suppose you drink? Lots of times I feel nervous or run down. Think about the past. I could have been on Easy Street. I had money. Could have been in business. Well, I get nervous. Just feel like I can't sit still, jittery. Just feel like I'd be better off if I had a drink. The more I drink, the more I feel I need it. Well, it made me feel like a big-shot. That's the satisfaction. No sir, that was the only thing. How did your drinking develop? Well, I started as a teen-ager. I used to get drunk. I used to run around with a rough bunch and drink. I had to drink to be a big-shot, be one of the boys. Well, nothing happened. I just kept drinking. There were no problems to start it. I just thought it would be exciting. I drifted into it. Well, I wanted to be like the other guys at work. (This man claims he stopped drinking eight weeks ago.) How did you stop? Well, I just stopped and looked at what I was doing, where I'm heading. I got to stop. I've lost eleven years of my life. Drank them away. I got three fifths right here in this sack. Haven't even busted 'em open.

Case 022: 41-year-old unemployed man. (Calls himself a heavy drinker. In poor health. Has ulcers, asthma, liver trouble, nervous trouble, and back trouble.) Why do men on West Madison Street drink so much? One reason is insecurity. They feel lost otherwise. Drinking gives you false courage. A man wants companionship. He doesn't like to be alone. How a person was raised counts a lot. Guys feel insecure and afraid. Can't face life, reality itself. Don't want to look to tomorrow. Talking about it makes me thirsty. Why do you suppose you drink? Don't ask me that. I don't know. Oh, yes I do, too. I used to think it was smart to be like the older people when I was 14. I don't feel good within myself. Well, sometimes it's my ulcers. They hurt like hell. I just get fed up and drink. I can't face reality as I said before. Also companionship. I like to drink when I talk. Boy, I need one now! How did your drinking develop? I was about 14. I wanted to be like the older big guys, wanted to be smart. Then it got to be a habit. Nothing ever happened, probably I felt inferior — physical and mental inferiority. I wasn't as strong and intelligent as the other guys. My brains are so befuddled I don't know if I'm coming or going. There were no special problems, none at all. Drinking is dominant in our family. Maybe it's hereditary.

Case 108: 40-year-old cook in railroad labor gang. (Calls himself a heavy drinker. Says he drinks 8 or 9 pints of wine a day.) Why do men on Madison Street drink? They may have made some mistake or had some disappointment that brought them to stages of drinking. A

man makes himself an alcoholic. Loss of home, loss of property, divorce, mistakes made during the war. Why do you suppose you drink? To forget my past, my ex-wife. I still love her. She wouldn't put up with my drinking. Heavy drinking started at the time of my divorce from my wife. I was drinking before divorce, but only moderately. But I couldn't control myself. Began to drink more every day. It started over the divorce. Now I have to drink all day as if to prove that I was going to drink whether she liked it or not. I love her yet. Loving her made my drinking heavier. (This man has been arrested more than 30 times, has been jailed 12-15 times.)

Case 131: 36-year-old man, dishwasher and laborer at spot jobs. (Calls himself a heavy drinker. Says he has excellent health, but reports that he has high blood pressure, arthritis, and a heart condition.) Why do men on Skid Row drink? I'd say broken homes for most of them. There are also a lot of veterans down here. They've got things on their minds. A man gets down here and he gets so disgusted at the living conditions I suppose he drinks himself into a stupor. Why do you suppose you drink? To start off with, you do it to get high. You do it to be a social drinker. It makes you feel out of this world. You don't care if you ever got a job or not. (Says he started to drink during the war.) I just never could stop. I was just a chronic drinker after that. I just drifted into it. No, there were no special problems. My brother was a heavy drinker himself until he married. Now he's against it. (This man says he consumes 5 or 6 pints of wine every day. Has been arrested about 25 times, was in jail the preceding day. Has been jackrolled at least 10 times.)

Case 207: 36-year-old spot job worker. (Calls himself a periodic drinker.) Why do you suppose you drink? Because I want to. Sure, I get a glow on. I feel good temporarily. I don't care to elaborate on it. There is such a thing as being a plain drunk. That's what I am, just a plain alcoholic. How did your drinking develop? I started social drinking. I never smoked or drank until I was 28 years of age. Started having a few drinks while playing cards. Then I started to drink by myself. Now I'm a confirmed alcoholic. I get the first drink and then I drink 'til I'm gone. How many arrests for drinking? Oh, God, I never was arrested in all my life until I came to Chicago. I was arrested 32 times last year.

Case 208: 63-year-old man, cook and waiter. (Considers himself a periodic drinker.) Why do you suppose men on Skid Row drink? Well, they don't got no home ties. They figure they got nobody to take care of other than themselves. Maybe some of them don't give a damn. That's what happens to them. Why do you suppose you drink? I drink to have a good time. I don't want to start any fights with anybody. Just want to relax. How did drinking develop? Just drifted into it. I didn't have any

problems. I don't have anybody to blame but myself. In prohibition, everybody drank. If you didn't drink, you weren't in with the crowd.

Case 212: 49-year-old spot job worker. (Calls himself a heavy drinker.) Why do you suppose men on Skid Row drink? Ninety-nine percent because of marriage troubles, broken homes. They get to drinking as a refuge of some kind. It helps one. There are other reasons, but that's the big one that I can think of. Many men drink to forget. My heavy drinking started when my first wife and I were divorced. I was drinking too much before. I've always drank, but it was always well controlled. Later, my sister got killed, and that really started it.

Case 215: 29-year-old man, spot job worker. (Calls himself a heavy drinker.) Why do you suppose men on Skid Row drink? Well, if I knew that, I wouldn't be down here. Why do you suppose you drink? I really don't know. I've tried to figure it out many times. Believe me, I've thought about it. No, there's no reason for drinking. It does something to you. No, I can't tell you. Neither can anyone else. How did drinking develop? I started slowly. Every time you get on a binge, the worse it gets. First started real heavy about 1949. That's when I started this gandy work and running around the country. Well, I've been here ever since. Nothing special happened. I can't tell you why. I wish I could. Wish I knew. Then I could do something. I took instant shock treatments. It was a doctor, a psychiatrist, who gave me little talks. Well, I felt good and was in good shape for about three months. Then I went back to drinking again. There's no permanent treatment for an alcoholic. Just builds you up for a while.

Case 225: 49-year-old man, gandy dancer on railroad retirement for the winter. (Calls himself a heavy drinker.) Why do you suppose men on Skid Row drink? They got different troubles. When they get drunk here, nobody cares. How would I know? Nobody knows why. Why do you suppose you drink? Lots of times I'm down in the dumps. To pick me up I go to the bar and get a couple. No, just to pick me up. Sometimes I just drink to kill time. I don't get a big kick out of it. It makes me mellow. Makes me feel relaxed, more or less relaxed. I couldn't say anything more than that. How did drinking develop? It's been going on for 30 years, at each year a little more drinking. The last couple of years I've been drinking more and more, a gradual thing. Just drink a little more and more each year. No, I drank before I was married and had no special problem. I've always drank. (This man says he's been arrested 50 times or more.)

## IV. SELECTED QUOTATIONS ABOUT CONQUEST OF ALCOHOLISM

Case 154: 73-year-old pensioner. (Has hernia, false left eye. Studied for priesthood. Claims he was a heavy drinker from 1920 until 1954.) How did you stop? By praying and will power. Who helped and how? A friend, our Lord Jesus Christ. I prayed. The power of God stopped me drinking.

Case 123: 35-year-old laundry worker. Were you ever a heavy drinker? I started when I was 25. Then I quit at 32. How did you stop? Went in a bar one day and got a shot. I just set it down and wouldn't drink after that. For 22 months I didn't take a drink. Now it's just once in a while. I just did it by myself.

Case 052: 69-year-old railroad pensioner. Were you ever a heavy drinker? On the summer when I was out I'd never drink, but when I used to come back in the winter I used to come back and drink for weeks. But I can't do it now. When I drink I get sick. Stopped two years ago. How did you stop? I just stopped. I said I wouldn't drink any more. I haven't got any desire for drink. When I walk by a saloon I don't even want to go inside of it. I was getting old. I couldn't take it any more. When you get old you can't take it any more.

Case 037: 53-year-old spot job worker. When did you stop drinking? Two and one-half years ago. I just got sick of everything. I was killin' myself. Nobody would take care of me. I'd drink over a pint of whiskey a day — that's without the beer. I saw I was making a fool of myself, so I just stopped. Nobody helped me. I just sat down and thought things over. I wasn't workin' at that time. They all laughed at me. But I never started again.

Case 571: 48-year-old machinist. How did you stop drinking? It became a problem because it was affecting my work, so I knew I had to stop. (Man stopped in 1949.) Who helped you? Alcoholics Anonymous helped me stop it. They gave me group therapy. You discuss your drinking problems with others who have a drinking problem.

Case 523: 68-year-old pensioner. (Troubled with hardening of arteries.) Were you ever a heavy drinker? Yes, years ago. I used to drink a lot, yes. When did you stop? I stopped about five or six years ago. How did you stop? Well, I met the AA people and went to meetings and see all those guys who were down and out and quit. I figured if they could stop, I could do the same. They helped me. They were very good, the men who went through the mill, and I thought if they could stop, so could I.

Case 520: 61-year-old janitor. The doctor told me if I didn't stop I'd be pushing up daisies when I was 50. (Stopped in 1925.) So I stopped. He said, "It will stop you if you don't stop."

Case 506: 54-year-old oiler in machine shop. (Has permanently stiff

neck.) I broke my neck in Bridewell. Fell off the top bunk, and I spent 21 days without getting a doctor or anything. I wouldn't of gotten worse treatment in Russia. Some lousy guard jerked my head, trying to get the kinks out of my neck. The pain was so terrible. I prayed. I didn't care to live. I haven't stopped praying yet. I quit drinking and I quit stealing. I used to be a burglar, and I liked it. But I haven't stole a dime since. I even wrote a story about being in Bridewell without a doctor, but I never heard nothin' about it.

Case 502: 66-year-old spot job worker receiving Social Security. How did you stop drinking? I just got disgusted with the other people. I worked pretty hard on the railroad and came in with $300 and buy everybody in the bar. I spent lots of money. It would only last overnight. Then they follow you outside and jackroll you in the alley. They did that to me, and I got disgusted with them. I stopped drinking, have no friends, and am glad to be done. I am happier now. Who helped you stop? Done it myself. I got jackrolled, and I was mad. So I stopped.

Case 488: 59-year-old man on relief. (Suffers from arthritis, cirrhosis of the liver, hernia, and heart trouble.) When did you stop? Ten years ago. How? I had to stop. It was either stop or die. If I went out and got drunk, you'd find me dead. Who helped? AA.

Case 461: 55-year-old watchman. In 1954 I was in the hospital about 33 days and hadn't drank any. I had bloody ulcers and I had lots of time to think, and I asked the doctor and he said drink didn't cause ulcers but it didn't help. I promised God if he'd let me get back with my family I'd stop drinking, and I did.

Case 389: 41-year-old unemployed man. (Has goiter trouble, nervous trouble, and stomach trouble.) When did you stop? 1954. How? Because my stomach was hurtin'. I stopped alone.

Case 293: 48-year-old spot job worker. When did you stop drinking? A month ago, about six weeks now. (Stopped altogether at that time, hadn't drunk heavily for six months previous to that.) I just simply saw the activities of other people. Got robbed, lost my teeth, glasses, overcoat. Decided it was time to cut that out. Who helped? Yes, a lot of people helped at missions. Told what would happen to them, what happened to them since they stopped drinking. That helped show me.

Case 306: 48-year-old spot job dishwasher. When did you stop? Five weeks ago. How? By coming to Salvation Army. They had us turn over our life to a power stronger than ourselves. If we had an urge to stop in a tavern near work, we'd say a prayer and keep right on. They've given me a mind at rest. Make you feel more at ease in what you do.

Case 308: 47-year-old spot job worker. (Troubled with high blood pressure, asthma, neck trouble, and aching elbow.) When did you stop? In November (four months previously). How? I just came in here (Harbor Light Mission). I wouldn't call it no "nose dive" — went to alter and

prayed to stop drinking, for the courage to stop. First few days really hard. Who helped? Well, people here at Harbor Light is only ones — only way. I was broke and had peddled me few clothes I had. They would give me a place to stay and something to eat. When I was in shape I worked, and they assigned me to a room. Then they signed me up on a work list. But they definitely did help me in a lot of ways, and I do appreciate that they did.

Case 310: 43-year-old spot job worker. (Troubled with sinus, endocarditis, and pulmonary congestion.) When did you stop? December, 1957 (14 months previous to interview). How? Well, I just quit and left it off. After I come here I had more encouragement. Who helped? I think I'll have to give credit to God. Through prayin' and askin' him to help. That's about all. Accepting Christ as my Saviour and livin' for him against the devil.

Case 319: 49-year-old janitor at Harbor Light. When did you stop? Forty days ago. How? I got out of jail after thirty days for being drunk, and the Salvation Army helped me. Talked with me and prayed with me. You have to make up your own mind to it, but they helped me. They'd throw me out if I got drunk again. You can't stay here when you're drunk.

*Chapter 13*

# *EVENTS THAT PRECIPITATED THE MOVE TO SKID ROW*

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The present chapter traces the sequence of events that immediately preceded the move to Skid Row. Later chapters will study the more fundamental causes; the objective here is to get the man's own story of his decision to join the ranks of homeless men.

The interviewers asked a series of open-ended questions to stimulate the men to tell their stories in their own words, such as the following:

a. How did you happen to choose West Madison Street (or other Skid Row area) as a place to stay?
b. Have there been any events or circumstances in your life that caused you to move here? Would you tell me what they are and what happened? PROBE: Well, you are living away from any family in a hotel (or rooming house) where only men stay. Many people would consider it an unusual place to live. Is there any particular reason for your being here?

The interviewers were asked to be particularly conscientious about recording verbatim the responses to this item. This subject was introduced after about fifteen minutes of interviewing, following a series of rapport-building questions on health, living conditions, and things liked or disliked about Skid Row.

It has often been claimed that a homeless man's story is likely to be pure fabrication, designed to impress, to provoke sympathy, or to achieve some other ego-satisfying goal of the speaker. The interview minimized this type of response by starting with a few simple topics about which the man would have no particular reason to lie. Consequently, the man found he had already given much information about himself when this subject was opened. He had either to tell the truth or to skillfully incorporate the information already given into a false answer.

Mode of Introduction to Skid Row. — The responses to the above questions were first reviewed by the coders for an answer to the question, "How did this man get to be familiar with Skid Row; how did he learn of its existence, and under what guidance did he come?" Table 13-1 summarizes the information obtained. The ways in which the men became

Table 13-1. HOW HOMELESS MEN GOT INTRODUCED TO SKID ROW (Percent of men mentioning)

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Needed cheap place to stay, inquired for such | 48 | 52 | 43 | 53 | 50 | 41 |
| Worked near here before coming here to live | 11 | 12 | 12 | 10 | 13 | 10 |
| Lived near here, in nearby neighborhood | 6 | 6 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 5 |
| Had friends living here, learned of Skid Row from them | 11 | 10 | 12 | 8 | 13 | 13 |
| First came to Skid Row to buy second-hand goods in pawnshops | * | * | * | * | * | 1 |
| Came to Skid Row for an occasional drink in the taverns | 4 | 3 | 5 | ... | 3 | 8 |
| Came for a job, heard about jobs available here | 24 | 25 | 25 | 23 | 20 | 27 |
| Sent by a welfare organization, no previous Skid Row experience | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 3 |
| Accident, just happened to come, not familiar with Skid Row | 8 | 10 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 9 |
| No information | 7 | 5 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 9 |

*Less than 0.5 percent

familiar with Skid Row, in order of frequency of occurrence, were as follows:

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| 1. Needed a cheap place to stay, had heard that this area provided cheap lodging; inquired about cheap lodging and was directed here | 48 |
| 2. Came here primarily to get a job from the employment agencies; had heard from others that you could find work here | 24 |
| 3. Had worked on jobs located near Skid Row; got familiar with Skid Row through work (including deliverymen) | 11 |
| 4. Had friends who lived here; got acquainted with Skid Row through them | 11 |
| 5. Came here by accident, just happened to land here, not familiar with Skid Row before | 8 |
| 6. Lived near here; was living in a nearby neighborhood | 6 |
| 7. Was introduced to Skid Row by a welfare organization that sent him here for lodging or meals, having had no previous contact with any Skid Row anywhere | 4 |
| 8. Was living in another part of town and came here for an occasional drink or drinking spree in the taverns | 4 |
| 9. Came here to buy second-hand goods in pawnshops | Less than 1 |

Note: The above categories add to more than 100 percent because they are not all mutually exclusive. For example, a man could both have "lived near here" and "came here occasionally for a drink."

Objective in Coming to Skid Row. — The findings were further clarified by a content analysis of the men's replies. Here, instead of asking, "How did he get to know about Skid Row?" the question was, "What was he looking for? What needs was he trying to satisfy?" The objectives revealed by this analysis were as follows (see Table 13-2 for full details):

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| 1. Needed a cheap place to live | 69 |
| a. Was pensioner, on public welfare | 16 |
| b. Was looking for a job, had had no previous contact with Skid Row | 33 |
| c. Was looking for a job, had had contact with other Skid Rows | 18 |
| 2. Was "down and out" — needed food, lodging, other direct and urgent help | 11 |
| a. Was looking for work, with no previous contact with Skid Row | 7 |
| b. Had had previous Skid Row contact, or not necessarily looking for work | 3 |
| 3. Was seeking anonymity, isolation from family because of chronic drinking; desired to continue drinking uninhibited by community forces | 10 |
| 4. Was seeking anonymity, isolation from family or community because of a crisis or unpleasant situation other than drinking | 7 |
| 5. Wanted to be near his work | 5 |
| 6. Other motives | 2 |
| Not able to determine motive | 5 |

Note: The above categories add to more than 100 percent because they are not all mutually exclusive.

Table 13-2. OBJECTIVES SOUGHT IN MOVING TO SKID ROW (Percent of men mentioning)

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Cheap place to live, total | 69 | 70 | 68 | 78 | 72 | 56 |
| On a pension, or sent by welfare organization | 16 | 13 | 16 | 23 | 11 | 11 |
| Working or seeking work, without previous Skid Row contact | 33 | 39 | 29 | 37 | 38 | 24 |
| Working or seeking work with previous Skid Row contact | 18 | 16 | 20 | 17 | 19 | 19 |
| Was "broke" or "down and out," needed emergency help, total | 11 | 11 | 11 | 10 | 10 | 13 |
| Had no place to go, looking for work, no Skid Row experience | 7 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 6 | 9 |
| Had no place to go, with previous Skid Row experience | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Desire for anonymity, isolation from family, because of drinking | 11 | 7 | 16 | ... | 6 | 27 |
| Desire for anonymity, escape from convention, causes other than drinking | 7 | 2 | 11 | 4 | 9 | 8 |
| Desire to be near work, sources of work | 5 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 6 |
| Desire to be near friends, relatives, welfare | 2 | 3 | 1 | 3 | ... | 2 |
| Not enough information to determine | 5 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 6 | 7 |

According to the men themselves, their objectives for moving to Skid Row were overwhelmingly economic. Almost 80 percent of all men interviewed claimed they first came to Skid Row under economic duress, with no motive other than to get a job, live in a cheap place, or to seek temporary help from a mission. Only about 11 percent said that the reason for coming was to drink without the inhibiting influence of friends and relatives. As would be expected, almost all of the men who came to Skid Row for this reason were chronic alcoholics at the time of the interview.

The large proportion of men who seemed to have been motivated by economic necessities, and the small proportion who seemed to be motivated by the desire to drink without inhibition show that the men pictured themselves as losers in the competitive labor market or as victims of monetary inflation. They are not for the most part just "a bunch of drunks who come down to Skid Row so they can stay drunk indefinitely or get drunk as often as they please."

Table 13-2 reveals one very important difference between the single men and the separated and divorced men. The single men appear to have been motivated much more by economic considerations, while the married men desired much more to escape and to seek obscurity.

Drinking was not the only cause of the move for the latter group. This may reflect the fact that the single man who drinks heavily or who is experiencing other personal crises is under less compulsion to move in order to escape censure than is the married man.

How the First Lodging on Skid Row Was Obtained. — The coders were asked to review the material for an answer to the question, "How did the man get his first lodging on Skid Row?" The results were as follows:

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| Total | 100.0 |
| Rented own room, chose own place | 75.8 |
| Private charity or mission gave him a bed | 6.0 |
| Public welfare department gave him disbursing order | 4.9 |
| Slept out in open, had no room | 0.2 |
| Unable to determine source of first lodging | 13.1 |

In more than three-fourths of the cases, the man chose his own lodging-place and paid for his own room. About 1 man in 9 started his career on Skid Row by sleeping in a bed given to him by a private or public welfare or other charity organization. In a comparatively high proportion of cases (13 percent) the interviews did not provide enough information to yield an answer to this question.

Coders' Evaluation of Events That Precipitated the Move. — Speculation about arrival on Skid Row might lead one to ask, "Why did this man arrive on Skid Row at the particular time he did? Presumably he was under pressure to make a move for some time; what happened during the few days or weeks immediately preceding his move that might have precipitated the moving?" Each homeless man's story was examined carefully to try to piece together a picture of the events that sent him to live in a Skid Row cubicle or rooming house. In many cases, the coders found it difficult to locate a unique precipitating event. They often found that a condition had existed until it finally became intolerable and led to the change of residence. Hence, the classification that was finally devised included both specific types of incidents and a few general types of situations which, if continued long enough, could lead to a shifting of residence to Skid Row. Following is a list of the categories which express the events or conditions that seemed to have precipitated the move to Skid Row.

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| 1. Prolonged unemployment, loss of job, exhaustion of savings | 33 |
| 2. Chronic heavy drinking (all forms) | 30 |
| a. Chronic heavy drinking, followed by breakup of marriage | 9 |
| b. Chronic heavy drinking, followed by flight from family | 3 |
| c. Chronic heavy drinking, other circumstances, general statement | 18 |
| 3. Seasonal or irregular employment, obtained through casual-labor employment offices | 26 |
| 4. Search for cheaper place to live while getting established (young man new to city) | 14 |
| 5. Marital discord, not a chronic drinker previously, or discord not connected with drinking | 12 |
| 6. Wanderlust; had led a life of wandering, was restless, on the go | 11 |
| 7. Lack of or inadequate source of support — pension or job (elderly man) | 10 |
| 8. Lack of adequate income, no family help, no training; always had lived in cheapest type of place (younger man) | 6 |
| 9. Breakdown of health, no funds to live elsewhere | 8 |
| 10. Lack of family contacts — became old or disabled but had no family with which he could live | 9 |
| 11. Had an accident that caused loss of ability to work or severe handicap so that he was no longer eligible for his regular employment | 6 |
| 12. Had experienced intense sorrow, grief, loneliness, or lack of orientation after death of a parent or spouse | 6 |
| 13. Had been disgraced, with prison record, not accepted most other places | 4 |
| 14. Had experienced personal disorganization resulting from military service | 4 |
| 15. Needed or wanted to be near his work or near employment offices | 3 |
| 16. Had experienced conflict with family, relatives other than wife, not a heavy drinker before coming to Skid Row | 1 |

According to the statements of the homeless men themselves, in more than one-half of the cases an employment problem triggered the move. In some cases it was no more than a search for casual day-labor or a job as a gandy-dancer that brought them there. In other cases it was a move to conserve money in order to search for a better job for a few more days or weeks. Uncontrolled drinking is only one-half as powerful as these factors of employment. It is highly important that 3 out of every 4 men said that lack of suitable employment or financial distress brought them there. While it is true that we have only the men's word for it, the evidence presented is sufficiently strong to suggest that future attempts to deal with Skid Row problems should include preventive action; unsuccessful jobseekers, especially the young men, might be aided in finding work.

Skid Row appears to collect more alcoholics than it creates, however. Table 13-3 shows that 65 percent of the men who were classified as chronic alcoholics had a drinking problem before they came to Skid Row and that this was a factor in their decision to move. For example, about one-fourth of all chronic alcoholics came to Skid Row after their marriages had broken up because of drinking, or after they could not any longer tolerate the family situation.

It is impossible to estimate from these data the independent effects of economic factors in comparison with drinking factors. It appears that about one-third of the men who later became alcoholics moved to Skid Row because of events other than drinking that were equally important.

In more than one-fourth of the cases, the move to Skid Row was precipitated by forces that could be classified as "just plain bad luck," — the breakdown of health, industrial accidents, and lack of a family to care for one in old age. These are for the most part the hazards of an unskilled workingman's life, for which Social Security is only a partial solution.

There is a small group of men who like living on Skid Row and have no desire to move away. They seem not to sense its poverty, dirt, and abnormality. Such men have never lived on a higher plane and do not hope to. It is said that many poor migrants to Chicago from the rural parts of the South respond this way.

Two other sets of precipitating events are worthy of note. One is an indication that the man had done something to "bring it on himself," such as spending his life wandering instead of sticking to a steady job, or committing a crime and getting a prison record; another is the indication that the man was emotionally disturbed because of a parent's or a spouse's death, military service, or family problems.

Table 13-3. EVENTS THAT PRESUMABLY HELPED TO PRECIPITATE THE DECISION TO MOVE TO SKID ROW (Percent of men mentioning)

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Chronic heavy drinking, followed by breakup of marriage | 9 | ... | 19 | 2 | 7 | 19 |
| Chronic heavy drinking, followed by flight from family | 3 | 3 | 4 | ... | 3 | 7 |
| Drinking in general, occasional previous Skid Row contacts | 18 | 20 | 18 | 7 | 12 | 39 |
| Marital discord, previously not heavy drinker, trouble not connected with drinking | 12 | ... | 28 | 10 | 12 | 16 |
| Conflict with family, relatives other than wife, not connected with drinking | 1 | 1 | * | * | 1 | 1 |
| Prolonged unemployment, loss of job, exhaustion of savings | 33 | 33 | 32 | 31 | 44 | 26 |
| Seasonal employment, starting to work for railroad, labor contractor | 26 | 30 | 24 | 24 | 26 | 30 |
| Accidental injury, causing loss of employment, unable to perform type of work for which trained | 6 | 3 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 4 |
| Breakdown of health, no funds to live elsewhere | 8 | 5 | 9 | 12 | 4 | 5 |
| Disgrace due to prison record or other cause, not accepted in former place of residence or desire to remain away | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| Wanderlust, restlessness, need to be on the go | 11 | 15 | 8 | 8 | 7 | 17 |
| Sorrow, grief, lack of orientation after death of parent or spouse | 6 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 5 |
| Lack or inadequate source of support-elderly men | 10 | 8 | 7 | 15 | 6 | 4 |
| Lack of family to care for him--elderly and disabled men | 9 | 10 | 6 | 14 | 8 | 4 |
| Personal disorganization resulting from military service | 4 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 1 | 9 |
| Needed a cheap place to live while getting established--young men | 14 | 18 | 12 | 20 | 11 | 8 |
| Lack of or inadequate income, other vague financial | 6 | 8 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 5 |
| Needed or wanted to be near his work, near employment offices | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 3 | 1 |
| Other types of events, vague statements of events | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| No information | 4 | 5 | 2 | 6 | 6 | 1 |

*Less than 0.5 percent

Summary. — This chapter has tried to describe the situation that the men say existed in the few days or weeks just preceding the move to Skid Row which might have stimulated them to come there. The events that precipitated the move may be summarized in terms of the eight concepts listed below. Each of these accounts for the arrival of at least some men. Often two or more of them act jointly to effect the decision.

1. The "empty billfold" phenomenon — poverty, economic distress, unemployment, irregular employment

2. The "birds of a feather" phenomenon — chronic alcoholics who gravitate there
3. The "rotten apple" phenomenon — acceptance induced by prolonged contact
4. The "plain bad luck" phenomenon — breakdown of health, industrial accidents, lack of family
5. The "wayward boy" phenomenon — men made homeless by wanderlust, criminal career, prison record
6. The "emotional disturbance" phenomenon — disorganization after death of a spouse; flight after quarrel with wife or family
7. The "hidden trap" phenomenon — curious people seeking a thrill, or ignorant people coming by accident who are trapped by the environment and find they cannot leave
8. The "uncritical acceptance" phenomenon — men who are unaware that they are living in squalor and hence are satisfied to stay

According to the testimonies of the men, by far the most important of these is the first. The homeless men claim the "empty billfold" was far more powerful than all of the others combined in precipitating the move. Bad luck in matters of health, pension, savings, or Social Security appears to be the second most powerful force. A majority of the alcoholics had a drinking problem before they arrived, and this seems to be third in importance, often combined with the others.

These eight "reasons" reported by the men should not be regarded as the fundamental explanation of why Skid Row exists or why men move there. These are merely types of situations that have developed in the lives of particular men which make such a move necessary or convenient. Each such situation represents a process of deterioration or change that developed for some time (usually many months or some years) until there was almost no alternative other than to move to Skid Row. A basic "theory of Skid Row" should identify the forces that caused or permitted these situations to develop. Part II of this study undertakes this task by concentrating on the homeless man as a person and upon his earlier family and adult life.

## Part II

# THE SKID ROW MAN AS A PERSON

*Chapter 14*

# *SOCIAL MOBILITY OF HOMELESS MEN: RISE THEN FALL*

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The very name "Skid Row" suggests that a majority of residents once held a respected status in society and "fell" from that status on going to live on Skid Row. This chapter attempts to show to what extent this is true. It will attempt to answer clearly several questions such as:

a. How many of the men are downwardly mobile (have fallen in status) and how many are simply men who never got off the bottom? Is it possible that some of them are upwardly mobile (now in a higher status than at some earlier time)?
b. What pattern does the work history show? Do these men rise in status during the early phase of their work history and then fall, or is the fall continual from the time of their first job?
c. How is drinking behavior related to downward mobility?
d. Do the men who are downwardly mobile go to Skid Row from positions of high social standing or from positions of relatively low social standing?
e. What has been the status of these men in comparison with that of their fathers?
f. Is there a characteristic pattern or patterns to the rise and fall of homeless men, or does it appear to be more or less random?

Unfortunately, the conventional methodology for the study of social mobility has not thus far developed sufficiently precise techniques for answering these questions. In order to adequately analyze the mobility of homeless men, it was necessary to "take time out" of this study to examine social mobility in general from a quantitative aspect. The materials presented in this chapter illustrate the use of the new approach.[1]

## THE SES SCORE AS A DEVICE FOR MEASURING SOCIAL MOBILITY

Most studies of social mobility have used an objective index of status, such as "occupation of the chief breadwinner," or a more subjective one with a few very broad categories, such as "upper class, middle class, working class, or lower class" to let the respondents classify themselves. The techniques employed by these approaches would not have worked well on Skid Row.

Even establishing the objective index poses difficult problems. Pres-

tige evaluation techniques are known to be prone to bias under the best of conditions; the responses of a sensitive, low-status group, such as the Skid Row men, would manifest this difficulty in an exaggerated form. Using occupational data in a conventional way does not solve the problem either. Even under "normal" circumstances, the broad occupational categories (such as the 13 categories used by the U.S. Census) are an extremely poor and inefficient measure of social mobility. For the majority of blue-collar and service occupations, the status differentials between specific highly specialized jobs tend to be very unclear and little known. The general public is not even aware of many hundreds of occupations of a blue-collar nature; only workers in the same general sector of the economy and labor force experts can rank them. Prestige in the lower ranks depends more on the income received from a job than on the nature of the work. Yet there are substantial status differences between these many-detailed occupations, and lumping them all into four categories (craftsmen, operatives, service workers, and laborers) destroys much valuable information about social mobility.

Since this is the case, use of the conventional occupational categories is limited for the following reasons:

a. Movement from one of these occupations to another usually represents a genuine status change in the eyes of a worker's colleagues and friends. The broad categories must classify a great deal of this mobility simply as labor turnover with no status change.

b. On the other hand, errors of the opposite sort are created. Many instances of job change are treated as if they represented status changes when in fact they may represent very little if any status change, or even a change in the opposite direction. In much intergroup shifting between broad occupational categories there may actually not be a status change, since the lowest status occupation in one category may be lower than the top status occupation in the next lower category.

c. The broad occupational categories do not provide a yardstick with an interval scale that will show how much "social distance" lies between two specific occupations.

d. The use of qualitative occupational categories confines the analysis to the use of statistical and mathematical models that are less incisive and powerful than those available for the analysis of continuous variables.

Together these disadvantages tend to be extraordinarily weighty in studying low-status groups.

It is possible to sidestep these difficulties quite simply by assigning

a status score to each detailed occupation recognized by the Census. These scores are treated as points along a continuous scale with quasi-equal intervals. Social mobility may be measured by comparing the scores of successive occupations. A man is then upwardly or downwardly mobile by the number of points of difference between the scores of the two occupations. This procedure was adopted for the present study.

It was theorized that the concept "socio-economic status" rather than "prestige" should be the foundation upon which to attempt to construct a quantitative score for individual occupations. In America, at least, the socio-economic and the prestige scales are highly correlated, and the major deviations between the two occur only at the extreme upper end of the scale, involving less than 5 percent of the population. This suggested a composite index comprised of two types of items — one type measuring social status and one type measuring economic status.[2] Since the U.S. Census is the only source of data for computing such an index, the choice of items is limited to what is available. In the 1950 Census, detailed occupations were cross-classified by several characteristics. From these data, the item of educational attainment was used to represent the social-status component, and the item of individual income was used to represent the economic-status component.

The score for each detailed occupation would be a weighted average of these two measures. The computational steps for arriving at this score were as follows:

1. Compute $Q_1$, $Q_2$, and $Q_3$ (median and quartiles) for educational attainment for each detailed occupation. Repeat for individual income.
2. Compute an average index of education attainment for each detailed occupation as follows: $\frac{1}{5}(2Q_1 + Q_2 + 2Q_3)$. This provides a measure in which the median value represents the average status, but will be shifted upward or downward moderately if an extraordinarily large proportion of the total group is concentrated toward an extreme point on the scale. Repeat for individual income.
3. Using the first factor-loading technique employed by Hagood in constructing level-of-income indexes, develop coefficients for weighting the index of educational attainment and the index of income, adjusted in such a way that a zero for both will yield a zero index and the average for all occupations in 1950 is equal to a score of 100. Deviation above and below this score then represents a percentage of the 1950 average. This score is identified as a "socio-economic score" (here abbreviated as SES).
4. Compute scores for each of the detailed occupations for which

education and income data are furnished by the Census. A complete listing of the occupations, and the score for each, is given in Appendix B.

## VALIDITY OF THE SES SCORES

Perhaps the most widely known set of scores for occupations are the Hatt and North prestige scores for a limited number of specific occupations. Actually, these are not "prestige" scores at all, but are only a weighting of the percentage of respondents who rated the "general standing" of each particular occupation. It is an error in logic to declare that the occupation which receives the largest share of votes giving it an "excellent general standing" is necessarily the occupation which the same raters would declare to have the highest comparative prestige. The prestige dimension seems to have been injected in the labeling. The sample on which the scores are based is small, and it is greatly to be doubted that middle-class and upper-class people have sufficiently accurate economic information about the comparative "goodness" of general standing of lower-status occupations to make their rankings very reliable. The perception of lower-status respondents about upper-status occupations is similarly blurred by lack of knowledge. As a result, both lower-class and upper-class persons would tend to overrate white-collar occupations and underrate blue-collar occupations. Moreover, the rating was made by reading off to respondents in an interview situation some 90 different occupations. Disinterest, boredom, and polite ambiguity would have ample chance to enter.

Only 45 of the occupations scored by the Hatt-North study correspond reasonably well to occupational categories on the Census list. The coefficient of linear correlation between the SES scores computed by the procedure described above and the Hatt-North scores for these occupations is .87. This high degree of correspondence suggests that socioeconomic status, rather than prestige as such, is a major component of the Hatt-North scores.

It must be admitted that these SES scores are not applicable for ranking specific elite positions, such as senators, mayors, corporation executives, etc., because the Census does not identify these as separate occupations. In the author's opinion, a bona fide prestige rating for elite positions has not yet been developed; the Hatt-North scores include only a few rather obvious high-status positions, but do not seem to rank even these adequately. For example, the following ranking of the top ten occupations probably would not get very wide validation from experts on social status:

1. U.S. Supreme Court justice
2. Physician
3. State governor

4. Cabinet member in the federal government
5. Diplomat in the U.S. foreign service
6. Mayor in a large city
7. College professor
8. Scientist
9. U.S. congressman
10. Banker

Moreover, these scores do not encompass the whole universe of high prestige occupations, or even sample it randomly or representatively. A valid prestige scoring system must somehow take account of the large within-occupation variance. For example, the above ranking would hold true for a comparison between the mayor of New York City and the Junior Senator from Idaho, but would not hold between the Junior Senator from New York and the mayor of Boise, Idaho.

One year after the SES scores of the present study were computed and employed in the coding of the occupational history of homeless men, O.D. Duncan computed a similar set of scores for the detailed occupation categories of the 1950 Census. The Duncan scores are a compromise between the purely socio-economic status approach employed here and the NORC scores; they undertake to interpolate between the scale values of the NORC scores, standardizing for age. The Duncan scores have a linear coefficient of correlation of .95 with the SES scores of this study. Strangely, the SES scores of this study have a higher linear correlation with the NORC scores than the Duncan scores have, despite the fact that the latter are linked to one component of the NORC ratios (.78 for Duncan versus .87 for the SES scores, for 45 comparable occupations). An examination of the major deviations between the SES scores and the Duncan scores reveals that most of the major differences occur toward the lower end of the socio-economic scale, and that in most cases the SES scores appear to be preferable. For example, consider the following list of occupations:

| | SES scores | Duncan |
|---|---|---|
| Cranemen, derrickmen, hoistmen | 90 | 21 |
| Carpenters | 81 | 19 |
| Metal molders | 80 | 12 |
| Painters | 80 | 16 |
| Cement and concrete finishers | 78 | 19 |
| Messengers and office boys | 77 | 28 |
| Loom fixers | 77 | 10 |
| Waiters in restaurants | 76 | 16 |
| Motormen in mines, factories, logging camps | 73 | 3 |
| Telegraph messengers | 67 | 22 |

| | SES scores | Duncan |
|---|---|---|
| Hucksters and peddlers . . . . . | 58 | 8 |
| Newsboys and news vendors . . . . . | 52 | 27 |
| Boardinghouse and lodginghouse keepers . . . | 47 | 30 |

It is believed that more students of occupational structure would tend to rank these occupations as in the left-hand column rather than as in the right-hand one. Messengers, motormen, telegraph messengers, newsboys, and lodginghouse keepers seem equally misranked in the Duncan scores.

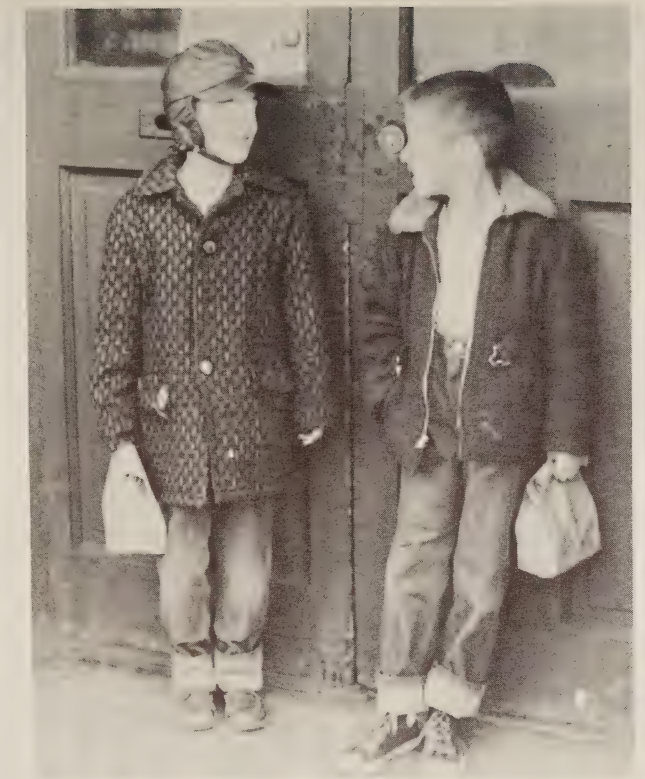
Summary. — Because of the high coefficients of correlation of these scores with the NORC scores and with the Duncan scores, it is believed that the SES scores for the present study are a valid measure of general socio-economic status. An examination of the deviation from regression leads to the conclusion that the SES scores are superior both to the NORC scores (which cover only a few occupations) and the Duncan scores. Moreover, the SES scores have a clear and unambiguous meaning, namely, "percent of the average situation in 1950." This is a standard reference point from which intercensal change as well as inter-occupational differences can be measured. The scale values of the NORC and the Duncan scores have no meaning other than a ranking. Nevertheless, the SES scores used for this study are regarded as only a very rough first attempt; a more insightful scheme for scoring the status of occupations can and should be developed. It is believed that the SES scores are sufficiently valid for use in the present study and for experimental studies of social mobility.

## CODING THE OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY OF HOMELESS MEN

During the interviews with the homeless men, a complete occupational history was taken. This included the year in which each job began and a complete description of each job. The coders were asked to evaluate the total work history and to select five points that best represented each man's work career. These five points were:

1. The first regular full-time job
2. The current job (last job if unemployed or retired)

3-5. Three principal jobs between the first and last that best portrayed the mobility pattern of achievement. In general, these were the jobs held longest and which had been held for as long as six months. If a short-term job with a high SES had been held for as long as six months, it was included arbitrarily. Thus, the scoring of the lifetime mobility was done in such a way that maximum emphasis was placed on recognizing upward mobility.



A FEW FAMILIES WHO HAVE HIT BOTTOM LIVE ON SKID ROW. THESE TWO BOYS LIVE WITH THEIR PARENTS IN A ROOMING HOUSE

PUERTO RICAN BOY TRYING TO HELP HIS FAMILY EARN A LIVING BY SHINING SHOES ON SKID ROW

After the five points were selected, the man's mobility profile was established by recording for each point the following information:

a. The SES score of each job, using the occupational scores for detailed occupations, as shown at the end of this chapter
b. The age at which the man entered that job
c. The duration of that job

A profile consisted, then, of four vectors (fewer if the man had not held five jobs) each beginning at a specified level, directed toward the SES of the next job, and represented by a line of a length proportional to the duration of the job. It is upon these materials that the present chapter is based.

## THE SES STATUS OF HOMELESS MEN

When the SES of the current or last job of homeless men is compared with the SES distribution of the male labor force in the United States in 1950, the very low condition of Skid Row men becomes apparent:

| SES score | Chicago Skid Row 1958 | U.S. Urban Males 1950 |
|---|---|---|
| 110 and above . . . . | 1.4 | 19.8 |
| 100 to 109 . . . . . | 5.1 | 27.5 |
| 90 to 99 . . . . . | 3.3 | 9.2 |
| 80 to 89 . . . . . | 9.6 | 21.7 |
| 70 to 79 . . . . . | 17.2 | 8.2 |
| 60 to 69 . . . . . | 52.8 | 6.3 |
| Below 60 . . . . . | 10.6 | 6.3 |
| Total . . . . . | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Median value. . | 67.4 | 97.0 |

Whereas almost 64 percent of the homeless men fell below a score of 70, only 13 percent of the U.S. males in the labor force had scores this low. The median score of 67 corresponds to the occupations of gardener, porter, charwoman, telegraph messenger, and general unskilled laborers. The score of 97, in contrast, corresponds with the general class of skilled craftsmen and foremen.

## THE SES OF THE FATHERS OF HOMELESS MEN

Homeless men seem to be drawn from all strata of the population, but the majority come from average middle-class homes of skilled and semi-skilled workingmen. Table 14-1 shows very little evidence to support a belief that they originate primarily in either the upper or the lower levels of society. In fact, the statistics suggest that the chances

Table 14-1. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS SCORES OF HOMELESS MEN AND THEIR FATHERS, BY JOB NUMBER AND DRINKING CLASSIFICATION OF THE MEN

| Item | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Tee-totaler | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Socio-economic status of father... | 87 | 92 | 94 | 96 | 96 |
| Socio-economic status of home-less men: | | | | | |
| Highest socio-economic status.... | 90 | 90 | 91 | 93 | 94 |
| Lowest socio-economic status..... | 65 | 61 | 61 | 63 | 67 |
| First job..... | 73 | 72 | 75 | 78 | 80 |
| Second job..... | 83 | 81 | 83 | 86 | 88 |
| Third job..... | 80 | 82 | 79 | 85 | 83 |
| Fourth job..... | 80 | 79 | 78 | 79 | 79 |
| Fifth job..... | 75 | 70 | 72 | 70 | 71 |
| STANDARD DEVIATIONS | | | | | |
| Socio-economic status of father... | 18 | 16 | 22 | 16 | 27 |
| Socio-economic status of home-less men: | | | | | |
| Highest socio-economic status.... | 15 | 15 | 17 | 15 | 16 |
| Lowest socio-economic status..... | 13 | 14 | 10 | 8 | 12 |
| First job..... | 18 | 18 | 18 | 19 | 18 |
| Second job..... | 16 | 18 | 18 | 18 | 16 |
| Third job..... | 15 | 16 | 17 | 17 | 16 |
| Fourth job..... | 14 | 13 | 18 | 14 | 14 |
| Fifth job..... | 14 | 13 | 14 | 12 | 11 |

that a son or a brother or some other relative will be on Skid Row are roughly the same for all parts of the population. Exceptions are for families falling in the upper 10-15 percent of SES who have lower risks, and for families falling in the 80-95 range who have slightly above-average risks. Since a score of 100 represents average SES in 1950, and since the SES of the entire population is rising from generation to generation, as the levels of educational attainment and real income rise, the average score of 94 for the fathers of all homeless men obviously represents almost an exact average for the entire older adult population. Moreover, the rather large standard deviation (± 15 points) connected with this average means that the SES of the homeless men's families was dispersed throughout a wide range. The 30-point range 79-109 must encompass two-thirds of the families. Within this range fall most of the skilled and semi-skilled (operative) occupations. Hence, homeless men are drawn principally from workingmen's families.

Table 14-2 reports that the lower the SES of the family from which a man reports he comes, the greater the probability that the man is a teetotaler. Although the differences are statistically significant at the .05 level, using the Chi Square test across all categories, only a comparatively small number of cases are involved at the extremes and could be explained at least partially by a possible tendency for an alcoholic to exaggerate the status of his family. On the other hand, poverty has already been shown to be a principal reason for teetotalers' and light drinkers' being on Skid Row, and the finding that they come from families that were of below-average income is most plausible.

Table 14-2. DRINKING CLASSIFICATION OF HOMELESS MEN BY SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS LEVEL OF THEIR FATHERS

| Socio-economic status of father | Percent of all homeless men | Percent of men in each drinking classification | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | Tee-totaler | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| All fathers..... | 100 | 100 | 14.0 | 27.3 | 24.5 | 19.5 | 14.7 |
| 110 and above..... | 16.3 | 100 | 11.8 | 21.0 | 23.6 | 24.6 | 19.0 |
| 100 to 109..... | 34.1 | 100 | 11.0 | 32.3 | 23.0 | 23.5 | 10.3 |
| 90 to 99..... | 5.3 | 100 | 14.3 | 23.8 | 22.2 | 25.4 | 14.3 |
| 80 to 89..... | 21.4 | 100 | 13.2 | 26.8 | 30.0 | 14.8 | 15.2 |
| 70 to 79..... | 13.9 | 100 | 18.6 | 25.7 | 22.7 | 13.2 | 19.7 |
| 60 to 69..... | 6.7 | 100 | 25.1 | 26.2 | 21.3 | 11.2 | 16.2 |
| Below 60..... | 2.3 | 100 | 21.4 | 21.4 | 28.6 | 17.9 | 10.7 |

## INTERGENERATIONAL MOBILITY OF HOMELESS MEN

The downward mobility of homeless men results not only from a decline from a higher status which they had achieved themselves, but also from a very substantial drop from a higher status ascribed to them by their families. The SES of the Skid Row men at their highest average status (their second job) is compared with the SES of their fathers, by drinking classification, in Table 14-1. In general, these men were far below their fathers in SES. Whereas the median SES of fathers was 87-96, the median peak SES of homeless men was several points below that.

The men with a drinking problem claimed a much higher status for their fathers than did the teetotalers or light drinkers. They also claimed a substantially higher status for themselves at the peak of their status before their fall. But even at their peak, the alcoholics showed a substantially greater intergenerational decline in status than did the others. Although this difference may have been due in part to the tendency for alcoholics to make exaggerated claims for their own past status and for their father's status, it is quite plausible that a part of this differential by drinking status may be genuine. As has been pointed out in other contexts, teetotalers have only one major reason for being on Skid Row — poverty — while alcoholics are on Skid Row because of poverty and drinking. It is quite plausible that teetotalers come from families which are somewhat poorer on the average than the families of alcoholics. It is beyond the scope of this study to determine whether the alcoholic derelicts actually came from families with slightly above-average SES status, as they claimed.

## THE AVERAGE LIFETIME MOBILITY PATTERN OF HOMELESS MEN

The average lifetime mobility pattern of homeless men is one of a small rise in status from an initial low-status point, and then a steady decline to a point even lower than the first job. Table 14-1 shows the

average SES of the men at each major job throughout their lives. It also shows the SES of the best job each man ever held and the SES of the lowest.

The homeless men entered the labor force at a comparatively low level; the average of 74 points is within the range where most nonfarm operative and unskilled-labor jobs lie. This, of course, represented a dramatic fall in comparison with the father. The men did experience some upward mobility from this modest start, for the second job averaged about 8 points higher than the first. Hence, this was the "peak" of the average homeless man's work career; thereafter he went downhill — the average SES of the third, fourth, and last job were successively lower than that of the job immediately preceding.

Since we do not have comparable data about the highest SES of father ever attained, we do not know how far below the father's peak performance the peak performance of the son fell. At some time in their lives, however, the homeless men acquired a job that was, on an average, equal in level to that of the average father, and 90 percent as high as the average for the whole male population.

Throughout this sequence, the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts claimed to have started at a slightly higher SES for their first job, to have risen to a higher point with their second job, but to have fallen much farther and to a lower point than the teetotalers.

The variance of all of these averages is comparatively large.

Table 14-3. SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF HOMELESS MEN ON PRESENT OR LAST JOB, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION

| Socio-economic status of homeless men | All homeless men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Teetotaler | Light | Moderate | Heavy | Derelict |
| All men | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 110 and above | 1.4 | 1.9 | ... | 3.0 | 1.2 | 1.1 |
| 100 to 109 | 5.1 | 7.6 | 5.7 | 3.7 | 4.6 | 4.9 |
| 90 to 99 | 3.3 | 7.0 | 1.9 | 4.0 | 2.9 | 1.6 |
| 80 to 89 | 9.6 | 15.3 | 8.5 | 12.4 | 7.1 | 5.5 |
| 70 to 79 | 17.2 | 20.4 | 17.0 | 13.0 | 17.0 | 21.9 |
| 60 to 69 | 52.8 | 41.4 | 54.6 | 53.5 | 53.9 | 56.8 |
| Below 60 | 10.6 | 6.4 | 12.3 | 10.4 | 13.3 | 8.2 |

## THE LIFETIME MOBILITY OF INDIVIDUAL HOMELESS MEN

There can be little doubt that all but a small fraction of homeless men arrive on Skid Row by loss of some higher status. Table 14-4 contains three summary tabulations which may be used to show the net effect upon SES of the individual man's job changes throughout his life. The first of these, "lifetime net mobility," is obtained by comparing the SES of the first regular full-time job which the man held with the SES of his last job. For this table, a difference of less than 5 points was arbitrarily defined as "no change." On this basis, almost one-half of

Table 14-4. OVER-ALL NET MOBILITY RESULT OF JOB CHANGES, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION (COMPARISON OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF FIRST JOB WITH SOCIO-ECONOMIC STATUS OF LAST JOB)

| Over-all net mobility | All Skid Row men | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-totaler | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| A. LIFETIME NET MOBILITY, TOTAL | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Rise | 32.9 | 39.6 | 43.1 | 35.6 | 23.6 | 17.9 |
| No change | 21.9 | 36.7 | 18.4 | 15.4 | 24.1 | 22.6 |
| Fall | 45.2 | 23.7 | 38.5 | 49.0 | 52.3 | 59.5 |
| B. LIFETIME POINTS RISE | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| None | 32.3 | 16.5 | 28.8 | 43.1 | 38.4 | 27.4 |
| 1-4 | 6.2 | 10.8 | 3.8 | 3.6 | 4.2 | 13.1 |
| 5-9 | 6.3 | 9.4 | 5.2 | 6.3 | 5.1 | 7.1 |
| 10-14 | 6.2 | 5.0 | 7.6 | 3.2 | 7.4 | 7.7 |
| 15-19 | 9.8 | 15.1 | 16.0 | 3.6 | 4.2 | 11.3 |
| 20-24 | 8.6 | 11.5 | 5.2 | 7.9 | 11.1 | 9.5 |
| 25-29 | 6.4 | 2.2 | 4.2 | 3.6 | 13.0 | 9.5 |
| 30 or more | 24.2 | 29.5 | 29.2 | 28.8 | 16.7 | 14.3 |
| C. POINTS FALL FROM LIFE-TIME PEAK | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| None | 17.0 | 30.9 | 16.3 | 19.4 | 11.6 | 10.1 |
| 1-4 | 8.6 | 10.8 | 8.7 | 9.9 | 8.3 | 4.8 |
| 5-9 | 6.0 | 9.4 | 4.9 | 3.6 | 6.5 | 8.3 |
| 10-14 | 9.9 | 11.5 | 13.2 | 6.7 | 7.9 | 10.1 |
| 15-19 | 12.2 | 10.1 | 13.9 | 12.6 | 9.7 | 13.7 |
| 20-24 | 7.0 | 4.3 | 5.6 | 8.3 | 4.6 | 12.5 |
| 25-29 | 10.5 | 3.6 | 7.3 | 13.8 | 15.7 | 10.1 |
| 30 or more | 28.8 | 19.4 | 30.2 | 25.7 | 35.6 | 30.4 |

the men on Skid Row were living at a lower status than they were when they first entered the labor force full time, which usually was at 14-19 years of age. More than one-fifth (23 percent) of the men were living on the same level, while only one-third were higher in the SES scale than they had been at the outset of their career. The more severe a man's drinking problem, the more likely he was to have suffered net lifetime downward mobility, while those without a drinking problem were much more likely to have enjoyed a net increase in SES over their lifetime. Nevertheless, abstinence from drinking had been no protection against downward mobility for almost one-fourth of the teetotalers, and about one-fifth of the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts had managed to climb above their starting point.

For men who were upwardly mobile at some time, panel B of Table 14-4 shows the extent of upward mobility. This was determined in the following way. The SES scores of all jobs held after the first were compared with the SES of the first job. If any one of them was higher in SES, then the difference between the SES of the highest job and the SES of the first job was computed and taken as the "lifetime points of upward mobility." Almost one-third of the men had never risen so much as one point above their starting SES; only about 1 in 4 had ever risen as many as 30 points. The median performance had been a rise of about 10 points. The men without a drinking problem had been more success-

ful in rising and had risen a greater average number of SES points than had the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts who had a median rise of 15-17 points. Even the moderate drinkers were much less upwardly mobile than the teetotalers and light drinkers.

After having located the highest SES point in a man's work career, it was then compared with his present SES. The difference between the two was tabulated as the total points' fall in SES from the lifetime peak. Only 17 percent of the men on Skid Row had not fallen from some higher status. About 90 percent of the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts had fallen from a higher status; the average number of points of decline was 20-24. In contrast, 70 percent of the teetotalers had declined in status, and the average fall had been about 12 points.

Summary. — Unless these men merely fabricated a rosy past, 83 percent were living at a lower status at the time of the interview than at some time in the past. Many of the men had never risen at all, or managed to rise only a few points; all except a tiny minority had fallen, and almost one-half had fallen so far that they were living below their starting SES.

## PATTERNS OF LIFETIME MOBILITY

Theoretically, there are five over-all patterns which a man's mobility career could take. He could be:

1. Nonmobile throughout his life
2. Upwardly mobile only
3. Downwardly mobile only
4. Upwardly mobile followed by downward mobility
5. Downwardly mobile followed by upward mobility

Each man was assigned to one of these five categories. The procedure was as follows. The SES of the first job and the last job were regarded as fixed points. Of the three intermediate SES points, two were selected which best represented the profile of his mobility career. The SES scores of the four consecutive points were then compared. Men who had held less than four regular jobs were scored with the jobs which they had held. If a change from one point to another represented a rise of 5 points or more, it was scored as "R" for "rise." If it represented a fall of 5 points or more, it was coded "F" for "fall." If the change was less than 5 points, either rise or fall, it was coded "N" for "no change." The mobility profile of each man could then be coded surely. "RRR" or "RR," for example, represented a continual rise. "FFF" or "FF" represented uninterrupted fall. Table 14-5 summarized the mobility pattern of the homeless men.

Two of the five mobility patterns stand out as being typical Skid Row mobility patterns. These are the up-then-down ("RF") pattern and the continuously downward mobility ("FF") pattern. Almost one-half of all

Table 14-5. LIFETIME PATTERN OF MOBILITY BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION, HOMELESS MEN ON CHICAGO'S SKID ROW

| Pattern of mobility | Total | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Tee-totaler | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Total..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Continuously nonmobile. | 9.9 | 16.5 | 8.0 | 10.3 | 6.9 | 10.7 |
| Upwardly mobile only... | 10.6 | 16.5 | 16.0 | 7.9 | 7.4 | 4.8 |
| Downwardly mobile only. | 20.6 | 4.3 | 17.7 | 28.4 | 24.1 | 22.6 |
| Up-then-down mobility.. | 45.7 | 43.9 | 49.6 | 36.4 | 46.8 | 53.0 |
| Down-then-up mobility.. | 13.2 | 18.7 | 8.7 | 17.0 | 14.8 | 8.9 |

Notes: By comparing the socio-economic status of consecutive jobs for four principal jobs, inter-job shifts were coded. (See text). The various combinations of shifts were classified as follows:

(a) Nonmobile: NNN,NN.
(b) Upwardly mobile only: RRR,RRN,RNR,NRR,RNN,NRN,NNR,RR,RN,NR.
(c) Downwardly mobile only: FFF,FFN,FNF,NFF,FNN,NFN,NNF,FF,FN,NF.
(d) Up-then-down mobility: RRF,RFN,RNF,RFF,NRF,RF,FRF.
(e) Down-then-up mobility: FFR,FRN,FNR,FRR,NFR,FR,RFR.

men (46 percent) followed the first and more than one-fifth followed the second. The continuously downward pattern is strongly associated with problem drinking. Whereas only 4 percent of the teetotalers had been continuously downwardly mobile, more than one-fourth of the moderate and heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts had this pattern.

About 10 percent of the men had been continuously nonmobile, and teetotalers exhibited this pattern to a greater degree than did the drinkers. About the same proportion had been continuously upwardly mobile, another pattern shown largely by the teetotalers and the light drinkers. A small percentage (13 percent) had experienced downward mobility followed by a recovering upward mobility. This pattern was exhibited most strongly by teetotalers and moderate drinkers. Thus, the two minor patterns of "RR" or "FR," to the extent that they are found on Skid Row at all, are negatively associated with alcoholism. There are, of course, groups of men who started at a very low point in the SES scale and who now are living on Skid Row but holding fairly good jobs.

## THE SES PATTERN AND THE ONSET OF DRINKING

An effort was made to determine the effect upon the SES pattern of the onset of heavy drinking. Drinkers were classified according to time when drinking began — before or during first job, second job, etc. No significant differences between the SES patterns of the men before the onset of drinking could be found. However, alcoholic derelicts tended to experience a very sharp drop in SES for the job held immediately after the onset of drinking. This is evidence that the pattern of rise then fall noted above is linked in many cases to the onset of heavy drinking.

The following data for alcoholic derelicts illustrate this finding:

| Alcoholism began before ____ job: | SES of jobs held 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | 5th |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 3rd . . . . . | 75 | 89 | 79 | 71 | 66 |
| 4th . . . . . | 79 | 81 | 87 | 76 | 70 |
| 5th . . . . . | 76 | 97 | 84 | 87 | 66 |

However, the above finding is by no means a complete explanation of downward mobility of Skid Row men. The pattern of rise and then fall which characterizes teetotalers and light drinkers is almost as great in magnitude as that for heavy drinkers and chronic alcoholics. Much of the downward mobility is accounted for by economic hardship and by maladjustment that did not manifest itself in alcoholism.

## CONCLUSION

This chapter has undertaken to demonstrate that a more refined analysis of social mobility can be made if SES scores are employed instead of traditional methods. It has been shown that Skid Row men are definitely lower in SES status throughout their lives than their fathers, so that much of the downward mobility is generational. Their over-all lifetime mobility pattern is marked by a comparatively low level first job, rising somewhat and then falling steadily to the present very low socioeconomic status. This pattern is definitely related to the onset of alcoholism in many cases, but alcoholism is only one of several forces at work to create downward mobility.

## FOOTNOTES

[1]The "system" of social mobility analysis presented here is submitted as a first approach to quantification. Because of the pressure of meeting the study deadline, it was devised in the spring of 1958 and immediately "frozen" into specific codes for IBM tabulation without experimentation. It is believed that the scoring system employed can be improved and that the full potential of this approach is not exploited by the statistical procedures employed here.

[2]This rests upon a well-established point of view in occupational analysis. Cf. Alba M. Edward's comment that, "Education is a very large factor in the social status of workers, and wage or salary income is a very large factor in their economic status." A Social-Economic Grouping of the Gainful Workers of the United States (G. P. O., 1938).

[3]Hagood, Margaret J. and Price, Daniel O., Statistics for Sociologists, revised edition.

[4]"A Socioeconomic Index for All Occupations," Ch. 4 in Albert J. Reiss, jr. (ed), Occupations and Social Status, The Free Press, 1961.

*Chapter 15*

# *FAMILY BACKGROUND OF HOMELESS MEN ON SKID ROW*

The problem of this chapter is, "What was the childhood family situation of homeless men, and how is it related to their present condition?"

In assessing the sociological and psychological forces acting on the lives of men on Skid Row, it is essential that two variables be controlled: these are drinking behavior and marital status.

a. Drinking Behavior. — It is reasonable to assume that the forces that influence a teetotaler or light drinker to go to Skid Row may be quite different from those that influence a chronic alcoholic to go there, or cause a person to become a chronic alcoholic after he arrives. Introducing this control also furnishes an unusual opportunity to study the factors in Skid Row alcoholism. Too often, studies of Skid Row alcoholism have not had adequate control groups. Alcoholics from Skid Row have been compared with normal persons in the general population or even with subjective impressions of what the non-alcoholic population is like. Differences between the Skid Row drinker and the general public or general non-alcoholic public have then been attributed to alcoholism. The present study compares Skid Row alcoholics with Skid Row non-alcoholics. Since both the control group of controlled drinkers and the experimental group of uncontrolled drinkers live on Skid Row, the inference that differences between them represent factors involved in alcoholism appears more warranted.

b. Marital Status. — The men on Skid Row are almost all without family and in this sense are very atypical of the general adult population. But they fall into three significantly different groups with respect to marital status:

   1. Men who have never married. It is quite extraordinary for a man to attain the age of 45 or 50 without marrying. The sociological and psychological factors that are involved in this life-pattern must be very different from those involved in marriage at a usual age.
   2. Men who marry and are then divorced or separated from

their wives. Unlike the first group, these men risked marriage, but found it unsatisfying or proved to be unsatisfactory mates.

3. Men who marry and are then widowed. These men risked marriage and supposedly remained married until the death of their spouse.

It is quite plausible to hypothesize that each of these groups comes to Skid Row for somewhat different reasons and in response to different combinations of factors.

Because drinking behavior and marital status undoubtedly are themselves interdependent and highly correlated factors, it is indicated that they should be simultaneously controlled.

The term "chronic alcoholic" is equivalent here to the combined categories of "heavy drinker" and "alcoholic derelict." If a factor is significantly related to the presence of chronic alcoholics on Skid Row, but not to the presence of teetotalers or light drinkers, it is interpreted as being a factor in Skid Row alcoholism. This factor is then examined separately for each drinking group to learn how marital status affects the picture. This process, repeated over and over for a wide variety of items, gives the following catalog of significant relationships:

1. Controlled drinkers -- with broken marriages
2. Controlled drinkers -- never married
3. Moderate drinkers -- never married and with broken marriages
4. Chronic alcoholics -- with broken marriages
5. Chronic alcoholics -- never married

Because the sample of interviews for homeless widowed men is considerably below the minimum number necessary for such detailed analysis, it was not possible to carry out a separate analysis for them. Hence, most of the materials in this chapter refer to never-married men and to men who were separated or divorced.

The findings presented here are based upon data furnished about his family by the man himself. The data report what the man apparently thinks was the situation in his home, but this may be only a crude approximation or even a distortion of the situation that actually existed. We have only his side of the story. The major basis for trusting the data is that there is a surprising absence of the kinds of responses that would indicate deliberate deception or unconscious distortions in defense of self. Nevertheless, all of these findings must be regarded as tentative until tested by objective observation by other means.

Method of Presenting the Evidence. — The quantity of materials generated by the three-variable tabulations is much too large to reproduce here. As a compromise, the following procedure has been adopted. The response to each major inquiry is shown as a percentage distribution, cross-classified singly with marital status and a three-

fold set of drinking categories. Table 15-1 and the tables that follow it illustrate the format.

## HAPPINESS OF PARENTS' MARRIAGE

In response to the question, "How happy was your parents' marriage?" more than 70 percent of the men claimed their parents' marriage was either "unusually happy" or "happy," while only about 13 percent reported it was "unhappy," "very unhappy," or that the parents were separated or divorced (Table 15-1). A fairly high percentage of Skid Row men (11 percent) had been reared by only one parent or by no parent (guardian, other relative, or institution) or had parents who were separated or divorced.

A disproportionately large percentage of the Skid Row men who had unhappily married parents turned out to be heavy drinkers or alcoholic derelicts. This is true both for men who had never married and for divorced or separated men. Conversely, men whose parents had been unusually happily married tended to be concentrated in the teetotaler or light-drinker class. Skid Row men who came from broken homes and had been reared by only one parent had no greater tendency toward alcoholism than Skid Row men who had been reared by happily married parents. Thus, the oft-repeated slogan that "Skid Row alcoholics come from broken homes," with the implication that the broken home causes the alcoholism directly, is not supported by these materials.

Table 15-1. HOW HAPPY WAS YOUR PARENTS' MARRIAGE?

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Unusually happy | 32 | 31 | 35 | 35 | 29 | 32 |
| Happy | 38 | 44 | 34 | 41 | 33 | 38 |
| Unhappy | 7 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 4 | 11 |
| Very unhappy | 5 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 8 |
| Parents separated or divorced | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 2 |
| Only one or no parent | 9 | 7 | 11 | 10 | 12 | 6 |
| No answer, vague answer | 7 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 15 | 4 |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE FATHER

It was hypothesized that perhaps the basic characteristics of their parents might be associated with the presence of the men on Skid Row. Accordingly, a variety of questions concerning the characteristics of the father and mother was asked. Following is a summary of the inquiries concerning the father.

Occupation of the Father (Table 15-2). — As the preceding chapter suggested in terms of SES scores, the men on Skid Row are drawn predominantly from workingmen's families. More than 3 out of 5 of those interviewed had fathers who were operatives, craftsmen, and unskilled nonfarm laborers. An additional 17 percent had fathers who were "white-collar" workers. This large number of men with nonfarm backgrounds contradicts a sociological theory that Skid Row is a haven for rural folk who migrate to the city and get disorganized as a result of the conflict between urban and rural living.

A higher percentage of the divorced or separated men on Skid Row come from middle-class families than from lower-class families. And of those men who claimed a higher status for their fathers, more tend to be heavy drinkers or alcoholic derelicts than teetotalers and light drinkers. Skid Row men who said their fathers were in business, either as managers and officials or as sales workers, were especially inclined to be alcoholics. This finding was much more pronounced for married men than for the never-married men.

Among Skid Row men with a farm background, few were uncontrolled drinkers. Both the never-married and the previously married men of this group were most frequently teetotalers and light drinkers. On the other hand, chronic alcoholism was especially prevalent among single men who were sons of unskilled laborers.

Table 15-2. FATHER'S OCCUPATION

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Professional, technical, kindred w'kr | 4.3 | 3.6 | 5.3 | 3.2 | 4.8 | 5.2 |
| Farmer, farm manager | 20.0 | 19.6 | 20.1 | 24.4 | 21.1 | 13.3 |
| Manager, official, proprietor, excluding farm | 9.1 | 8.1 | 11.6 | 7.4 | 6.9 | 13.1 |
| Clerical, kindred worker | 1.7 | 2.7 | 1.2 | 1.2 | 0.5 | 3.2 |
| Sales worker | 1.9 | 2.0 | 2.2 | 1.2 | ... | 4.1 |
| Craftsman, foreman, kindred worker | 23.0 | 19.3 | 25.4 | 19.8 | 23.7 | 26.8 |
| Operative, kindred worker | 18.2 | 23.0 | 14.9 | 17.9 | 21.1 | 16.5 |
| Private household worker, service worker | 3.5 | 4.7 | 2.2 | 5.4 | 2.4 | 1.8 |
| Farm laborer, foreman | 0.8 | 1.2 | 0.7 | 1.6 | ... | 0.4 |
| Laborer, excluding mine | 11.9 | 11.8 | 12.1 | 13.4 | 10.5 | 11.1 |
| Occupation not reported | 5.5 | 3.9 | 4.3 | 4.3 | 9.1 | 4.5 |

Father's Income (Table 15-3). — Each man was asked to classify his family in one of four broad income groups: "very poor," "poor," "comfortable," or "well-to-do." Almost two-thirds of the men reported they came from "comfortable" families, while only 7 percent said their families were "very poor." This also contradicts a widely held theory

Table 15-3. FATHER'S INCOME STATUS

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Very poor | 7 | 9 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 6 |
| Poor | 20 | 21 | 19 | 21 | 18 | 20 |
| Comfortable | 63 | 64 | 66 | 61 | 63 | 66 |
| Well-to-do | 6 | 3 | 9 | 5 | 8 | 7 |
| Income not reported | 4 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 2 |

that extreme family poverty drives men to Skid Row, either because of lack of economic opportunity or because of drinking caused by lack of hope for a better level of living. However, family poverty seems to be related to the fact that a high percentage of men on Skid Row have never married. A much higher percentage of the single men were from very poor and poor families, and a lower percentage were from well-to-do families than were the separated and divorced men.

With respect to drinking, only two sets of significant relationships developed from the income-of-father classification. A disproportionately large share of the separated and divorced men who came from very poor families were also teetotalers or light drinkers, while a disproportionately large share of all the men from well-to-do families were moderate drinkers. Since both of these findings refer to small groups of men, it is difficult to assign any great explanatory value to them. Skid Row is not a collecting-place for the alcoholic sons of wealthy fathers. Only about 6 percent of the men claimed to have come from wealthy families, and of these only about 35-40 percent were uncontrolled drinkers, an average share for Skid Row men.

When taken together, the evidence accumulated thus far suggests that more than one-half of all homeless men on Skid Row, and perhaps as many as two-thirds, come from families that were comfortable or well-to-do and where the parents were happily married. Thus, the search for explanatory factors must probe more deeply into the family background.

Personal Characteristics of Father (Table 15-4). — Each respondent was asked, "What kind of person was your father?" and his responses were probed to bring out the basic temperament and personal characteristics of the parent without biasing the responses. Replies to this open-ended question were coded into a rather detailed set of categories. The codes are divided into two broad groups: "good" traits and "bad" traits. All but a small minority of the men reported nothing but good traits for their fathers. Affection and hard work or industry were the two traits of the father most often mentioned. Those who did voice

criticism of their fathers most frequently mentioned that they were hot-tempered or given to fits of rage, were mean and abusive, or domineering and demanding. In general, the men who were separated

Table 15-4. WHAT KIND OF PERSON WAS YOUR FATHER? (Percent of men mentioning)

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Good traits of father: | | | | | | |
| Happy, good-natured | 12 | 10 | 14 | 9 | 14 | 16 |
| Gentle and kind | 17 | 19 | 16 | 16 | 20 | 16 |
| Friendly, popular, everyone liked him | 11 | 12 | 8 | 11 | 11 | 11 |
| Even-tempered, calm, hard to get excited | 6 | 9 | 3 | 7 | 7 | 6 |
| Understanding, sympathetic, empathetic | 9 | 6 | 10 | 11 | 9 | 7 |
| Loving, affectionate, good to children | 44 | 41 | 47 | 50 | 38 | 41 |
| Hard worker, good provider, ambitious | 52 | 51 | 50 | 55 | 53 | 48 |
| Honest, dependable, kept his word | 11 | 10 | 13 | 11 | 12 | 11 |
| Emotionally stable | 4 | 5 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| Quiet, uncommunicative, not boisterous | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Gregarious, liked to be around people | 6 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 3 | 10 |
| Liberal, progressive in views | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | ... | 2 |
| Good associates, straight, home-man | 12 | 10 | 14 | 14 | 10 | 11 |
| Other positive but vague | 42 | 45 | 41 | 43 | 47 | 38 |
| Bad traits of father: | | | | | | |
| Depressed, unhappy, morbid, brooding | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | ... |
| Mean, abusive | 7 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 11 |
| Unfriendly, hostile, disliked people, not liked | 2 | 4 | ... | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Hot-tempered, grouchy, given to fits of rage | 8 | 8 | 9 | 6 | 11 | 9 |
| Not understanding, unsympathetic, inconsiderate, cruel | 4 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 |
| Cold, distant, little affection for children | 4 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 4 |
| Lazy, poor worker, not steady, not ambitious | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Dishonest, cheating | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | ... | 1 |
| Emotionally unstable | 2 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 4 |
| Boisterous, loud, show-off, talkative | 2 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Solitary, liked to be alone, withdrawn | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | ... |
| Domineering, demanding, ascendant | 8 | 5 | 10 | 6 | 7 | 11 |
| Meek, easygoing, let people take advantage | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 4 | 1 |
| Reactionary, conservative, old-fashioned | 3 | 3 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 2 |
| Stingy, miserly, not willing to have comfort | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| Spendthrift, couldn't handle his money | 2 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Rough-tough associates, rough character | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Other negative but vague | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 10 |

or divorced tended to praise their fathers more than did men who had never married.

Although most men said only kind things about their fathers, the men who were chronic alcoholics were more inclined to report fathers with "bad" traits than were the teetotalers or light drinkers. For example, of the few men who indicated that their fathers were emotionally unstable, domineering, unfriendly, mean, unaffectionate, or lazy, an extraordinarily large percentage were uncontrolled drinkers. But the relationship is not a strong one; all but a small portion of alcoholics claimed their fathers had only good traits.

Attitude toward Father (Table 15-5). — Coders were asked to evaluate the respondent's description of his father and then to classify his over-all feeling for the father into one of the following categories:

a. Very critical of father, with evidence of intense dislike
b. Critical of father, with evidence of moderate degree of dislike
c. Not critical of father, but little evidence of affection
d. Critical of father, but also expressing a liking for him
e. Not critical of father, with evidence of a moderate level of affection
f. Uncritical of father, with evidence of great affection

Table 15-5 summarizes the percentage of men falling in each of these categories. The typical reaction fell into category (e) or (f) — one of affection for the father, with no criticism whatsoever. More than one-half (59 percent) of the men voiced no criticism of the father, while showing evidence of moderate or strong affection. Intense dislike of the father was inferred from the interview responses for only 7 percent of

Table 15-5. ATTITUDE TOWARD FATHER (Percent of men mentioning)

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, dere licts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Uncritical, great affection | 21 | 18 | 23 | 20 | 26 | 20 |
| Not critical, moderate affection | 37 | 39 | 36 | 50 | 28 | 26 |
| Critical but liked | 18 | 18 | 20 | 9 | 20 | 28 |
| Not critical, little evidence of affection | 10 | 13 | 7 | 11 | 14 | 5 |
| Critical, moderate dislike | 6 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 11 |
| Very critical, intense dislike | 7 | 7 | 6 | 7 | 6 | 9 |

the men, and moderate dislike was indicated by an additional 6 percent.

A higher percentage of chronic alcoholics was found in the group of men who openly expressed dislike for their fathers than was found in the group of men who either were not critical or showed some active affection. This relationship was especially strong among the never-

married men.

Father's Treatment of Children. — Each respondent was then asked to describe the father's treatment of the children and his attitude toward them. Most of the men (roughly 80 percent) claimed favorable treatment from the father. Only a small minority claimed that the father was abusive, gave too much discipline, or that he was neglectful or was otherwise to be criticized for his treatment of his children. Alcoholism was slightly more prevalent among these men than among those who gave the father a favorable report. The favorable report was more frequently found among never-married men than among those who were divorced or separated.

Father's Prison Record. — About 94 percent of the men said their fathers had never served a prison sentence. In the 6 percent of the cases where the father had served such a sentence, the son was much more inclined to be an uncontrolled drinker. Although the proportions involved are small, the relationship is a strong one.

Father's Drinking (Table 15-6). — About 20 percent of all homeless men had fathers who were heavy or periodic drinkers. This proportion, however, was much higher (31 percent) among the Skid Row men who themselves were chronic alcoholics. Thus, having a father who drank heavily is positively correlated with alcoholism among Skid Row men. This also is a very strong relationship.

Table 15-6. DID YOUR FATHER DRINK?

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Never drank | 36 | 32 | 12 | 37 | 37 | 35 |
| Light drinker | 13 | 13 | 11 | 15 | 14 | 8 |
| Moderate drinker | 10 | 11 | 10 | 7 | 11 | 14 |
| Periodic drinker | 6 | 6 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 8 |
| Heavy drinker | 14 | 13 | 16 | 9 | 12 | 22 |
| Not heavy drinker but no other information | 22 | 26 | 16 | 30 | 19 | 13 |

## CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MOTHER

Personal Characteristics of the Mother. — When asked, "What kind of a person was your mother?" all but a very few men extolled their mother's virtues. Following are the traits that were attributed most frequently to the mother:

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| Loving, affectionate, good to children | 59 |
| Good housekeeper, good cook | 34 |
| Gentle, kind | 32 |
| Hard worker, industrious | 22 |
| Understanding, sympathetic | 21 |
| Vague but positive ("a good woman," "no bad habits") | 43 |

**Table 15-7. WHAT KIND OF PERSON WAS YOUR MOTHER?**

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, dereliicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Good traits of mother: | | | | | | |
| Happy, good-natured | 6 | 4 | 7 | 7 | 4 | 5 |
| Gentle, kind | 32 | 30 | 35 | 33 | 28 | 32 |
| Friendly, popular, everyone liked her | 7 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 3 | 8 |
| Even-tempered, calm, hard to get excited | 4 | 3 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 7 |
| Understanding, sympathetic, emphathetic | 20 | 23 | 18 | 20 | 24 | 18 |
| Loving, affectionate, good to children | 59 | 59 | 54 | 58 | 58 | 59 |
| Hard worker, good provider, ambitious | 22 | 23 | 23 | 26 | 23 | 17 |
| Honest, dependable, kept her word | 4 | 2 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| Emotionally stable | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 6 | 4 |
| Quiet, uncommunicative, not boisterous | 6 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 7 | 7 |
| Gregarious, liked to be with people | 3 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Liberal, progressive in views | ... | * | * | * | * | * |
| Good associates, straight, stay-at-home | 11 | 9 | 13 | 14 | 7 | 10 |
| Good housekeeper, cook, wife | 34 | 33 | 34 | 33 | 39 | 31 |
| Other vague but positive | 43 | 45 | 42 | 46 | 36 | 44 |
| Bad traits of mother: | | | | | | |
| Depressed, unhappy, morbid, brooding | * | 1 | * | 1 | 1 | * |
| Mean, abusive | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| Unfriendly, hostile, disliked people, not liked | ... | * | * | * | * | * |
| Hot-tempered, grouchy, fits of rage | 1 | * | 2 | * | 2 | 2 |
| Not understanding, unsympathetic, inconsiderate, cruel | 1 | 1 | 1 | ... | 2 | 1 |
| Cold, distant, little affection for children | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Lazy, poor worker, not ambitious | * | * | * | * | * | 1 |
| Dishonest, cheating | ... | * | * | * | * | ... |
| Emotionally unstable | * | * | * | * | * | 1 |
| Boisterous, loud, talkative, show-off | 1 | * | 1 | 2 | * | 1 |
| Solitary, liked to be alone, withdrawn | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 | * | 1 |
| Domineering, demanding, ascendant | 7 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 10 | 4 |
| Meek, easygoing, let others take advantage | 4 | 3 | 5 | 2 | 2 | 9 |
| Reactionary, old-fashioned, conservative in views | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | * | 2 |
| Stingy, miserly, not willing to have comfort | 1 | * | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Spendthrift, couldn't handle money | 1 | * | 2 | 1 | * | 2 |
| Rough-tough, ran with rough crowd | * | * | * | * | * | * |
| Bad housekeeper, sloppy, neglected home | ... | * | 1 | * | * | 1 |
| Other vague but negative traits | 1 | 45 | 43 | 1 | 2 | * |

*Less than 0.5 percent

As Table 15-7 shows, the derogatory categories — mean, abusive, hot-tempered, not understanding, no affection for children, depressed or morbid, reactionary or old-fashioned, stingy, spendthrift, lazy, dishonest, emotionally unstable — were each used by only 1 or 2 percent of the men. Thus, the homeless men on Skid Row place almost no responsibility for their troubles upon their mothers. This is true in all drinking classifications. Actually, there was a tendency for the chronic alcoholics to be even more laudatory of their mothers than the nonalcoholics. The teetotalers were more inclined to describe their mothers in objective terms — hard-working, industrious, a good housekeeper — whereas the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts were a little more inclined to use the emotional categories — loving, gentle and kind, understanding and sympathetic.

If Table 15-7 on the characteristics of the mother is compared with the corresponding Table 15-4 for the father, it can be seen immediately that far more virtues and fewer faults were ascribed to the mother than to the father.

Attitude toward Mother and Implied Level of Affection. — The extent of this adulation may be seen more clearly in Table 15-8, which measures the over-all level of criticism of the mother and the implied level of affection for her. This table corresponds to Table 15-5 for fathers. Almost 80 percent of the men implied a moderate or high level of affection for their mothers and made no comment of any kind that would imply criticism of them. About 17 percent did venture some criticism, but of these more than two-thirds immediately indicated that they also had affection for their mothers. Only about 5 percent of the men were both critical of their mothers and showed evidence of dislike.

Before the interviews were undertaken, the reputation of these men for having a strong mother attachment was appreciated. The interviewers were given special coaching to help them encourage the men to express any critical thoughts they might have about their parents. As the statistics show, despite almost open invitations to the respondents to criticize their parents, they gave no signs of a high level of criticism

Table 15-8. ATTITUDE TOWARD MOTHER (Percent of men mentioning)

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Not critical, great affection | 43 | 36 | 46 | 38 | 48 | 46 |
| Not critical, moderate affection | 36 | 43 | 31 | 46 | 34 | 24 |
| Critical but liked | 12 | 11 | 14 | 8 | 8 | 19 |
| Not critical, little evidence of affection | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| Critical, moderate dislike | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 5 |
| Very critical, intense dislike | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | ... |

or resentment of either the father or the mother; criticism is at an especially low level in the case of the mother.

It is significant that the men showed no restraint in expressing criticism of other men on Skid Row, of the hotels, their employers, the missions, or almost any other topic about which they were resentful or critical. It is, therefore, quite plausible to assume that they lacked such feelings about mother and father. Hence, the fact that 65 percent of chronic alcoholics expressed strong affection for their mothers and only 46 percent of the teetotalers and light drinkers expressed such affection may be taken as moderate support for the "mother-love" hypothesis. But it must be re-emphasized that strong mother-love is a trait of teetotalers and light drinkers to only a slightly smaller degree.

Mother's Treatment of Children. — Quite in accord with the above findings, less than 2 percent of the men reported that their mothers were "abusive" or "neglectful" of their children, and almost all of the comments concerning treatment of the children were favorable. About 1 man in 10 reported his mother was "strict," and an additional 9 percent said the mother was more protective than the father, but they approved of this treatment. In neither case was there any positive association between these descriptions of the mother and alcoholism. Thus, there is no evidence whatever that the men realize there might be a relationship between poor child-rearing practices and their own presence on Skid Row.

Mother's Drinking. — Less than 1 percent of the men reported their mother was a periodic or heavy drinker. More than 80 percent of the mothers never drank; about 15 percent were light drinkers; and only 3 percent were moderate drinkers. There was a slight tendency for mothers who were light or moderate drinkers to have sons who were uncontrolled drinkers, but again, so few uncontrolled drinkers had drinking mothers that this could at best be a very minor factor in explaining drinking behavior.

## ATTACHMENT TO PARENTS

After asking the men about the father and mother individually, the interviewers asked a series of questions designed to bring out any unusual attachments to one parent or the other or an unusual degree of dependence upon parents.

Which Parent Was Liked Most (Table 15-9). — When asked, "Which of your parents did you like most, your father or your mother?" about one-half readily stated it was the mother, and only 8 percent (one-sixth as many) stated they loved the father most. About 30 percent said they loved both parents about the same. Men who loved their mothers most were somewhat more inclined to remain single than were men who showed no parental preference or preferred the father. There was a

Table 15-9. WHICH PARENT DID YOU LIKE MOST?

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Liked both same | 28 | 29 | 29 | 30 | 26 | 28 |
| Liked father best | 8 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 6 | 9 |
| Liked mother best | 48 | 52 | 46 | 48 | 43 | 53 |
| Lived with only one parent or none | 9 | 7 | 11 | 10 | 12 | 6 |
| No information | 6 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 13 | 3 |

small but significant tendency toward uncontrolled drinking among the men who loved their mother most which does not occur among the men who preferred their father or preferred neither parent.

Which Parent Helped You the Most When You Were Growing Up? — This question tended to elicit answers similar to those concerning liking for parents, except a slightly larger proportion of the men than were willing to admit affection for the father indicated that the father had helped them the most.

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| Mother helped the most | 48.7 |
| Equal help | 27.8 |
| Father helped the most | 13.8 |
| Neither one helped very much | 1.8 |
| Not living with any parent | 1.4 |
| No answer | 6.5 |

As before, a slightly higher proportion of the men who believed their mothers had helped them the most were chronic alcoholics. Also, chronic alcoholism was extraordinarily prevalent among the small group of men who reported that neither parent helped very much.

Coders' Evaluation of Excessive Attachment to Parents (Table 15-10). — The coders were asked to study the entire section pertaining to home and family life and to try to determine whether there was evidence of excessive or abnormal attachment to one parent. They were asked to code each man into one of the following categories:

a. No evidence of excessive attachment to either parent
b. Definite evidence of excessive mother-attachment, dislike for father
c. Definite evidence of excessive mother-attachment, toleration for father or no father
d. Definite evidence of excessive father-attachment, dislike for mother

e. Definite evidence of excessive father-attachment, toleration for mother or no mother
f. Definite evidence of excessive attachment to both parents
g. No parents, unable to classify

Table 15-10. CODERS' EVALUATION OF EXCESSIVE ATTACHMENT TO PARENTS

| Evaluation | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| No evidence of excessive attachment to either | 60 | 60 | 62 | 65 | 56 | 58 |
| Mother attachment, dislike of father. | 4 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 5 |
| Mother attachment, toleration of father or no father | 19 | 20 | 20 | 15 | 17 | 26 |
| Father attachment, dislike of mother. | 1 | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | 1 |
| Father attachment, toleration of mother or no father | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 3 |
| Excessive attachment to both parents. | 4 | 5 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 3 |
| No parents or unable to classify | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | 2 | ... |
| No information | 8 | 6 | 6 | 6 | 15 | 4 |

The coders could find no evidence of excessive attachment to either parent for 60 percent of the men, while for 25 percent of the men they inferred definite signs of excessive attachment for one parent or the other, or both. About 23 percent of the men showed mother-attachment, while about 4 percent showed father-attachment, and 4 percent showed excessive attachment to both parents. The differences between never-married and separated or divorced men were negligible.

Among men who showed no evidence of attachment for either parent, there was a small but highly significant deficit of chronic alcoholics, while for men with a mother-attachment there was an excess of alcoholics. Where the attachment was to the father or to both parents, there seemed to be very little extraordinary predisposition toward alcoholism. Thus, if the evaluation of the coders was reliable and unbiased by their knowledge of the drinking behavior of the men (they were warned to guard against such a bias), there appears to be a moderate but unmistakable correlation between an abnormal or unusually intense attachment for the mother and excessive drinking. However, these facts must not be overlooked:

a. A great many of the men on Skid Row who are not chronic alcoholics also have an excessively strong mother-love. Perhaps this is a factor predisposing a man to live apart in a familyless situation rather than a factor predisposing to pathological drinking behavior.
b. A very high percentage (in fact, more than 65 percent) of the

chronic alcoholics did not show evidence of excessive attachment to the mother.

On balance, excessive mother-love could not alone account for the presence of more than a tiny fraction of the chronic alcoholics on Skid Row. It might be concluded that the signs in the missions saying, "Have you written to your mother lately?" the many mission sermons that make use of the mother theme, and the oft-observed deference and obedience which homeless men show for matronly welfare workers who fit the mother stereotype, have a solid basis in observable fact — for more than one-half of the men loved their mothers more than their fathers, believed their mothers helped them more than their fathers, and about 1 in 4 showed an abnormally strong attachment to the mother. But this seems to be an outstanding characteristic of teetotalers and light drinkers on Skid Row almost as much as of alcoholics.

Reasons for Preferring One Parent. — When a man reported that he liked one parent more than the other, he was asked, "Why do you think you liked your (father, mother) the most?" The leading reasons given were:

| | Percent of all homeless men who preferred | |
|---|---|---|
| | Mother | Father |
| Was more interested in me | 41 | 22 |
| Was more companionable | 23 | 36 |
| Was more understanding | 17 | 8 |
| Took care of me | 14 | - |
| Gave me presents | 14 | 13 |
| Was more affectionate | 8 | 3 |
| Defended me, took my part | 8 | 3 |

Approximately the same ranking and proportions were found for never-married men as for separated or divorced men. A concentration of chronic alcoholics was found among the men giving each of the above types of responses. For single men, chronic alcoholism was especially concentrated in the groups who answered "more companionable," "defended me," and "took care of me." Within the group of married men, alcoholism was most pronounced among those who preferred their mothers because they were "more understanding," "more interested in me," or "other parent behaved badly."

The most impressive single thing about these categories is that together they indicate an extraordinarily egocentric view of the parent. Almost all of the reasons given for liking the parent express selfish pleasures derived from association with the parent, use of the parent for psychological self-gratification, or appreciation for personal services rendered by the parent. There is very little expression of liking

the parent in terms of appreciation for his desirable characteristics or for altruistic motives. These seem to be the responses of a dependent, the kind of answer one would expect from a child or a teenager. It is difficult to pass judgment on these responses because one does not know how a cross section of the "normal" adult population would respond to this question. It is quite possible that a high percentage of persons would revert to a childlike point of view and would interpret the situation as they did when they were children, if asked this question.

## DOMESTIC DISCORD IN PARENTAL HOME

After querying the respondents about their liking for their parents and their parental preference, if any, the interviewers asked a series of questions about domestic discord in the childhood homes.

Quarreling by Parents. — The men were first asked whether or not there was quarreling by the parents. About 75 percent reported that their parents did not quarrel a lot, and only about 15 percent reported a substantial amount of discord in the home. Among this minority of men who indicated domestic discord, the proportion of heavy drinkers was substantially above the expected proportion.

Parent to Blame for Quarreling. — About one-half of the men whose parents quarreled a great deal placed the blame on the father; only about 9 percent blamed the mother; another 9 percent blamed both; and more than one-fourth said they did not know. These proportions were roughly the same for both the never-married men and the men who were separated or divorced. Among men who blamed the father, a disproportionately large share of both the ever-married and single men were heavy drinkers or chronic alcoholics.

Reasons for Parents' Quarreling. — When asked to give the reasons for their parents' quarrels, 29 percent of the group of men whose parents quarreled frequently reported that drinking by the father was a major reason. The second most important specific reason given was that the father was unfaithful and ran around with other women. The mother was reported as unfaithful by none of the married men and by only about 3 percent of the single men. About one-half of the men gave vague or general reasons for their parents' quarrels which did not involve either drinking or marital infidelity. Since drinking by the father was a major topic of discord, and a disproportionately large share of drinking sons had fathers who drank, it probably is safe to conclude that aside from this problem there was not a great deal more domestic discord in the parental homes of men who became alcoholics than in the homes of men who became teetotalers or light drinkers.

## OTHER CHILDREN IN THE FAMILY

Size of Family. — Men on Skid Row come from families of all sizes, with no particular concentration at any specific number of family members. In comparison with the general population, however, a disproportionately large share of the Skid Row population is drawn from large families. That this is true may be seen from the following comparison:

| Number of Children | Percent of families of Skid Row men | Percent of native white women 45-49 years of age in 1940, with 5-6 years of school[1] |
|---|---|---|
| Total . . . . . | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| 1 child. . . . . | 8.3 | 12.7 |
| 2 children . . . . . | 7.7 | 17.5 |
| 3 children . . . . . | 9.0 | 15.3 |
| 4 children . . . . . | 15.2 | 13.8 |
| 5-6 children . . . . | 20.0 | 18.9 |
| 7-9 children . . . . | 27.3 | 14.8 |
| 10 or more children. | 12.6 | 7.0 |

[1] Source: 1940 Census of the United States, Differential Fertility, Women by Number of Children Ever Born, Table 109.

The right-hand column of the table shows the number of children ever born in 1940 to native white women 45-49 years of age who had completed only 5-6 years of grammar school (a rough approximation of the socio-economic level from which Skid Row men come). The left-hand column shows the size of families from which Skid Row men come. It is evident that a disproportionately large share of the Skid Row men come from families with seven or more children, and a disproportionately small share come from families with one to four children. However, this characteristic applies to the teetotalers and light drinkers as well as to the uncontrolled drinkers. Hence, coming from an unusually large family seems definitely to predispose toward living on Skid Row but is not necessarily a factor predisposing a man to heavy drinking.

Birth Order of Homeless Men. — There is almost no relationship between family position and presence on Skid Row, or between family position and drinking status.

Relations with Siblings. — The men were asked how well they got along with their brothers and sisters while they were still living at home. About 20 percent of the men reported that they got along unusually well with their brothers and sisters, while an additional 63 per-

cent said they got along "all right" with comparatively little trouble. Only about 16 percent reported serious trouble among the children. Of these, about one-half said they got along fairly well, but that there was a considerable amount of bickering. The remainder was about equally divided between those who reported serious difficulty with only one child and those who reported severe trouble with two or more brothers and sisters. Wherever there was bickering reported in the family, the percentage of men who were chronic alcoholics increased. This was true for both never-married and married men.

Favoritism by Parents (Table 15-11). — The men were asked whether or not the parents showed favoritism toward one child and, if so, which parent and toward which child. About 62 percent of the men reported that the parents had no favorite. This question is of importance in testing two hypotheses:

a. That homeless men are overprotected boys who have become disorganized after death of the overprotective parents
b. That homeless men are rejected boys who were "pushed aside" in favor of other brothers or sisters

Table 15-11. DID YOUR PARENTS HAVE A FAVORITE CHILD? (Of those with parents and siblings)

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| No favorite | 62 | 66 | 60 | 66 | 53 | 62 |
| Both favored the respondent | 6 | 4 | 7 | 5 | 4 | 6 |
| Mother treated respondent as favorite, not father | 5 | 5 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 6 |
| Father treated respondent as favorite, not mother | 3 | 2 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 2 |
| Both parents favored another | 7 | 7 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 8 |
| Mother favored another, father none | 2 | 2 | 3 | 3 | 1 | 3 |
| Father favored another, mother none | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 4 |
| Both parents rejected respondent | 1 | 2 | ... | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Father rejected, not mother | 2 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 |
| Mother rejected, not father | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 |
| No information | 10 | 8 | 8 | 8 | 17 | 6 |

Excluding from consideration persons who were the only child in their families, about 37 percent of the respondents reported that there was definite favoritism in their families. In about 14 percent of the cases, the respondent claimed that he was the favored child, and in about 13 percent of the cases, the parents were said to favor another child. In only about 4 percent of the cases did the respondent say he was definitely rejected by one or both parents. Among single men, both the hypotheses of overprotection and of rejection get mild support from the data. Although the number of cases is very small, a significantly high-

er percentage of the single men who claimed to have been their mother's favorite child were uncontrolled drinkers, and a significantly higher percentage of men who indicated definite rejection by one or both parents were uncontrolled drinkers. Strangely, among the single men who reported the parents favored a brother or sister, there was no tendency toward alcoholism.

Among the teetotalers who had never married, the love of the parent for another child was a significant variable — a disproportionately large share of these men reported that one or both parents favored a brother or sister.

## LEAVING HOME, AND DEATH OR REMARRIAGE OF PARENTS

Age at Leaving Home (Table 15-12). — In comparison with the general population, the Skid Row men seem to have left home either at a very young age or at an unusually old age. About 11 percent of the homeless men left home before they were 16 years of age, and about 25 percent left home before their 18th birthday. About 50 percent left home after the age of 20. Those who were separated or divorced left at an even earlier age than did the single men. It has been said that there is a great concentration of men on Skid Row who did not leave home until nearly middle age, and this seems to be true for a substantial proportion of the never-married men. Almost 20 percent of the single men did not leave home until after they were 30 years of age, and 10 percent were 35 years old before they left home.

Table 15-12. AGE AT LEAVING HOME AND AGE AT DEATH OF PARENTS, ALL SKID ROW MEN

| Age | Age at leaving home | Age at death of father | Age at death of mother |
|---|---|---|---|
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Under 15 years | 11 | 15 | 12 |
| 15-17 years | 18 | 6 | 8 |
| 18-19 years | 17 | | |
| 20-21 years | 15 | 10 | 6 |
| 22-24 years | 12 | | |
| 25-29 years | 12 | 16 | 15 |
| 30-34 years | 6 | | |
| 35 years and over | 6 | 23 | 26 |
| No information | 4 | 16 | 12 |
| Parent living | ... | 15 | 20 |

Among single men who left home very early, a significantly higher-than-average percentage were uncontrolled drinkers. The single men who left home after age 30 tended to be teetotalers or light drinkers. Actually, except for the small group who left before age 15, all of the drinking differences were found to be small; approximately the same proportion of men were in each drinking classification irrespective of

age at the time of leaving home.

Status of Parents at Time of Leaving Home. — About 43 percent of the men left their parents' homes when both parents were still alive and living together. In about 14 percent of the cases the father had died and the mother was still living as a widow. In 10 percent of the cases the mother had died and the father was a widower. In only about 6 percent of the cases had one parent died and the other parent remarried. In 15 percent of the cases both parents had died. It is often said that homeless men are those who have remained with a widowed mother until her death or remarriage. The data show this to be a rather infrequent occurrence. The coders were asked to make a special count of such cases: 13 percent of the single men and 4 percent of the married men had remained with the mother until her death. Only about 1 percent had left home after the remarriage of a widowed mother.

Uncontrolled drinking occurred with unusual frequency among the very small group of single men whose parents were both living but were separated or divorced at the time the men left home. There was a preponderance of teetotalers among the men who had lived with the mother until her death. In other words, this pattern seems to correlate with the fact that these men are on Skid Row, but not with the fact that they are alcoholics. The status of the parents at the time of leaving home has little effect upon the drinking behavior of the married men.

Present Status of Parents. — At the time the men were interviewed, about 70 percent of the single men and 60 percent of the separated or divorced men had lost both parents. In only about 5 or 6 percent of the cases were both parents still alive and living together. This, of course, is due to the generally older age of the men themselves. In many cases their parents had died since the men left home. Only about 7 percent of the single men had a widowed mother, and 3 percent had a mother who had remarried. About 5 percent had a father living. Since they were a younger group, a higher percentage of the separated or divorced men tended to have one or both parents still living.

Age at Death of Father (Table 15-12). — Almost one-fourth of the respondents reported that they were not fully grown (had not reached 20 years) when their fathers died. This probably is a major reason why many of the men are on Skid Row. There is, however, no significant relationship between drinking and age at death of father.

Age at Death of Mother (Table 15-12). — A small percentage of men reported they were less than 20 years old when their mothers died. Thirteen percent of these men were single and 22 percent were married. Death of mother when the respondent was young was not related to alcoholism.

Age at Which Widowed or Divorced Parent Remarried. — It has been pointed out above that about 6 percent of the men had a widowed parent

who had remarried, and that among the single men of this group there was a small excess of alcoholism. This group was further subdivided to learn whether the age of the respondent at the time of the parent's remarriage affected drinking behavior. Almost two-thirds of the remarriages of mothers of single men occurred before the man was 15 years of age, and it is in this group that alcoholism is especially concentrated. In contrast, the separated or divorced men were older, on an average, when their parents remarried, and there was no significant relationship between the remarriage of the parent and alcoholism.

Effect of Remarriage of a Widowed Parent upon the Homeless Men. — Each man whose parent had remarried was asked a series of questions concerning how he was affected by the remarriage. Almost one-half of them said that it had no effect — that they considered the step-parent as a real parent. About 40 percent of the single men whose parents had remarried reported some effect. In about one-fourth of the cases they felt strange or neglected as a result of the remarriage, and in this group there was an excess of alcoholism. One-fifth of the cases reported open conflict and hostility, either with the step-parent or with their own parent. Strangely, in this group there was a deficit of alcoholism. These men tended to be teetotalers who had retreated to Skid Row without ever marrying.

## CODERS' EVALUATION OF CHILDHOOD HOME LIFE

After reading through the entire interview and keeping in mind the comments made in response to all questions, the coders were asked to make a series of ratings concerning the home life of each man. They were asked to make these ratings as objectively as possible, without reference to the characteristics of the man at the time of the interview.

Unfavorable Conditions in the Respondent's Boyhood Family Situation (Table 15-13). — A list of conditions which would seem to predispose a child to a disorganized, unhappy, or abnormal adulthood was drawn up, and the coders were asked to state whether or not each of the situations existed in the families of the homeless men. Following is a list of these conditions, with the percentages of the single men and of the separated and divorced men who fell into each category:

| Family conditions | Percentage of single men | Percentage of separated or divorced men |
|---|---|---|
| a. Disorganized, alcoholic, neurotic, psychotic parents | 9.7 | 12.4 |
| b. Broken home | 19.4 | 27.5 |
| c. Parents neglected children, showed lack of affection | 9.5 | 9.2 |
| d. Parents pampered and babied the respondent | 9.3 | 12.8 |
| e. Family was uneducated or poor, low socio-economic status | 19.4 | 17.0 |
| f. Home was filled with strife and conflict | 9.9 | 12.0 |
| g. Parents inflicted severe physical punishment | 7.2 | 10.7 |
| h. Man had no home as a boy, was brought up in an institution | 2.9 | 2.7 |
| i. Parents ignored boy, or bullied him, or gave other ego-destroying treatment | 4.1 | 4.2 |
| j. Boy was victim of parental unlove, was shown little, if any, affection | 5.8 | 6.3 |
| None of the above | 31.3 | 31.0 |

Aside from broken homes (item b, above), and low educational and socio-economic status (item e, above), each unfavorable family situation applied only to a minor share of the population (7-12 percent). However, these conditions tended to be only partially duplicative, so that about 70 percent of the men had one or more of these unfavorable conditions in his home life. The childhood home life of men who had married and divorced or separated was consistently poorer than that of men who had never married. Thus, there is unmistakable evidence that unsatisfactory home life in childhood is associated with lack of success in marriage.

With respect to alcoholism, among the men who had none of the undesirable conditions in boyhood family life, there is a comparative deficit of heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts and an above-average proportion of teetotalers and light drinkers. This is true both for men who had never married and for the separated and divorced men. Thus, a comparative absence of all undesirable family conditions is conducive to a lower incidence of alcoholism. The following summary illustrates

the point:

| | Uncontrolled drinkers | |
|---|---|---|
| | Percentage of single men | Percentage of separated or divorced men |
| Total . . . . . | 26.8 | 41.1 |
| With no "bad" family conditions . . | 13.7 | 34.3 |

When the "bad" family conditions are examined singly for their effect in promoting alcoholism, the following items seem most conducive to heavy drinking among unmarried men:

Parents disorganized, alcoholic, neurotic, psychotic

Table 15-13. CHARACTERISTICS OF BOYHOOD SITUATION

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Widowed | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| UNFAVORABLE CHARACTERISTICS.... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Disorganized, alcoholic, neurotic, psychotic parents. | 10.1 | 9.7 | 12.4 | 4.1 | 6.4 | 11.1 | 14.5 |
| Poor, uneducated family..... | 17.5 | 19.4 | 17.0 | 13.1 | 21.0 | 13.8 | 15.5 |
| Home filled with strife and conflict..... | 10.9 | 9.9 | 12.0 | 12.4 | 8.1 | 11.4 | 14.2 |
| Broken home..... | 23.5 | 19.4 | 27.5 | 24.8 | 23.2 | 24.9 | 22.6 |
| Parents inflicted severe punishment..... | 9.4 | 7.2 | 10.7 | 14.5 | 7.3 | 8.7 | 13.0 |
| Neglect, lack of affection... | 9.0 | 9.5 | 9.2 | 8.3 | 7.5 | 11.7 | 8.8 |
| Pampered and babied..... | 10.3 | 9.3 | 12.8 | 6.2 | 8.0 | 6.9 | 16.5 |
| Ignored, bullied, ego-destroying treatment..... | 4.0 | 4.1 | 4.2 | 4.1 | 4.5 | 3.3 | 3.9 |
| Victim of unlove..... | 6.2 | 5.8 | 6.3 | 8.3 | 4.3 | 9.3 | 6.1 |
| Wild, irresponsible in youth. | 9.6 | 7.4 | 11.0 | 14.5 | 4.7 | 11.1 | 15.5 |
| Strong wanderlust in youth... | 20.8 | 23.7 | 20.4 | 17.9 | 16.5 | 12.6 | 33.7 |
| No home, institutional living | 2.7 | 2.9 | 2.7 | 2.1 | 2.3 | 3.9 | 2.2 |
| No unfavorable condition reported..... | 33.6 | 31.3 | 31.0 | 39.3 | 38.0 | 39.6 | 22.4 |
| FAVORABLE CHARACTERISTICS..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Parents normal, well adjusted | 50.3 | 55.7 | 38.3 | 57.9 | 55.8 | 42.9 | 48.4 |
| Parents compatible, marriage happy..... | 56.0 | 63.1 | 41.7 | 63.4 | 58.8 | 51.5 | 56.0 |
| Parents loved, cared for children..... | 53.1 | 56.9 | 42.8 | 55.9 | 58.1 | 42.9 | 54.3 |
| Parents offered good training for adulthood..... | 24.9 | 25.8 | 21.2 | 23.4 | 28.2 | 21.9 | 22.6 |
| Family income adequate..... | 53.4 | 52.2 | 45.5 | 60.7 | 49.0 | 53.8 | 59.2 |
| Man was well-adjusted during adolescence and early manhood..... | 45.3 | 41.6 | 39.3 | 60.0 | 45.1 | 47.4 | 43.7 |
| School performance average or better..... | 45.9 | 46.8 | 39.7 | 42.8 | 39.3 | 39.0 | 60.9 |
| Early work performance normal | 34.3 | 29.7 | 31.1 | 43.4 | 34.5 | 31.8 | 36.1 |
| At age 20-25 man appeared socially and psychologically mature..... | 20.9 | 12.4 | 20.7 | 31.0 | 22.2 | 20.4 | 17.2 |
| Unable to determine..... | 8.8 | 8.9 | 22.8 | 2.1 | 7.5 | 16.2 | 4.7 |

Home filled with strife, conflict
Parents inflicted severe punishment
Parents "pampered" and "babied" respondent
Parents ignored, bullied, or gave ego-destroying treatment
Parents withheld affection

Thus, not only did a higher percentage of the separated and divorced men experience each of the undesirable types of family life, but a greater number of these variables were related to alcoholism. It may be that these experiences made it difficult or impossible for the men to enjoy a satisfactory marriage, and that the combination of an unsuccessful marriage and a poor childhood family situation together account for the higher rate of alcoholism among the separated and divorced men.

Favorable Conditions in the Respondent's Boyhood Family Situation (Table 15-13). — A list was drawn up of conditions which would seem to predispose a child to live a normal, happy adulthood in good mental health. The coders were also asked to state whether or not each of these conditions existed in the families of the homeless men. Following is a list of these conditions, with the percentage of the single men and of the separated or divorced men who fell in each category:

| Family conditions | Percentage of single men | Percentage of separated or divorced men |
|---|---|---|
| a. Parents normal, well-adjusted, stable personalities . . . . . | 55.7 | 38.3 |
| b. Parents were compatible, marriage was happy . . . . . | 63.1 | 41.7 |
| c. Parents loved their children, cared for them well . . . . . | 56.9 | 42.8 |
| d. Parents appeared to give children good training for adulthood . . . | 25.8 | 21.2 |
| e. Family income was adequate. . . | 52.2 | 45.5 |

These ratings, of course, were made on the basis of the material given by the men and hence reflect their own interpretation of their home situation.

On an average, the men who had never married experienced more favorable family situations than did the men who were separated and divorced.

The meaning of these statistics is subject to the interpreter's point of view. If one begins with a theory that poor family conditions are the leading cause explaining why men arrive on Skid Row, then it would be surprising to find that roughly one-half of the men report excellent or

good family situations. If one begins with the assumption that they all should come from good family situations, then the proportions shown above are discouragingly low. Since similar measures of other populations are not available, one cannot learn just how these proportions compare with the proportions of other low-income groups or the general population.

The coder's summary of home conditions was cross-classified by marital status and drinking behavior, and the cross-tabulation has been reproduced in full at Table 15-13. From this table a very disconcerting fact emerges.

Contrary to what might be expected, the men with "good" family background factors have drinking behavior that is only very slightly better than the average of Skid Row men. One might have hoped that a very high proportion of the men from boyhood homes rated as "favorable" would be teetotalers or light drinkers and that there would be a comparatively large deficit of heavy drinkers or chronic alcoholics among them. Instead, roughly one-fourth or one-fifth of the men with "good" family background factors were uncontrolled drinkers, and this is only a very little less than what one would expect on the basis of chance selection from the Skid Row population.

Summary. — Materials reported in this chapter give support to the hypothesis that a poor home environment is conducive to marital discord, failure to marry, and alcoholism among men who are found living on Skid Row. But these factors account for only a small part of the situation. In general, chronic alcoholism tends to be associated with:

a. Homes where the parents are unhappily married and where there is quarreling and discord between husband and wife
b. Homes where the husband has "bad" personal traits — drinking, infidelity, has served a jail sentence
c. Homes where the children are mistreated
d. Excessive emotional attachment and overdependency upon the mother
e. Lack of affection or dislike for either parent
f. Serious quarreling between siblings
g. Development of an egocentric attitude toward parents
h. Being the mother's favorite child
i. Death of either father or mother during adolescence
j. Leaving home at an extraordinarily early age
k. Parents disorganized, neurotic, or psychotic
l. Being the youngest or the oldest child in a large family

Among single men, 13.7 percent of those with none of the undesirable family background factors were chronic alcoholics, whereas 26.8 percent of all single men were chronic alcoholics. If all single men had

had no adverse family background factors but were like all homeless men in all other respects, the percentage of alcoholism would be reduced, at most, by 13.1 percentage points, or by about one-half. A similar line of reasoning leads to the conclusion that boyhood family factors cannot account for more than one-fifth of the alcoholism among separated and divorced men.

The analysis makes it abundantly clear, however, that coming from a good home is no insurance against living on Skid Row, and provides no probabilities as to either marital status or drinking classification.

*Chapter 16*

# *COURTSHIP, MARRIAGE, AND FAMILY LIFE OF SKID ROW MEN*

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About 45 percent of the men who live on Skid Row have never married. Of the remainder very few are at present married; almost all who ever were married have been divorced or separated from their wives. These facts lead one to the hypothesis that the present status of these men is somehow related to their courtship and marriage experiences. The present chapter focuses on this sector of their lives. The topic requires two separate inquiries:

a. Why didn't the single men ever marry? Did these men ever participate in a courtship, and if they did, why did it not culminate in marriage?
b. What caused the marriages of the separated and divorced men to fail? In what ways are these failures related to the presence of these men on Skid Row?

The material assembled suffers from certain limitations which must be pointed out before beginning the analysis. Although the findings are consistent and meaningful, it is nevertheless true that the single-interview approach allowed only one side of the story to be obtained. To the extent that courtship and marriage are emotion-laden factors relating to a man's presence on Skid Row, the subject is one about which he might be highly sensitive — especially if the story reflects upon him as a person. It is surely possible that Skid Row men would be inclined to revise the history of their courtships and marriages in order to lessen whatever feelings of guilt, failure, and regret they might have. It would have helped to have a parallel interview with the woman or women involved, as well as the testimony of one or more objective observers, but obviously these sources of data were beyond reach.

Unfortunately, it is impossible to determine what form the biases may take. A man in a state of self-hatred may blame everything on himself and will tolerate no hint that his wife or fiancee failed to do everything she could to make the relationship successful. Another man may place the entire burden of guilt upon the female party. Still others may project their difficulties onto family members, in-laws, or others who "interfered."

The subject of courtship and marriage was introduced after the re-

spondent had just described his boyhood and young adulthood. The effect in many cases was to produce an emotional upset. Not infrequently the interviewers were faced with the unpleasant choice of pressing the issue and risking termination of the interview, or of glossing over this subject which appeared to be of paramount importance. The tactic, in these cases, was to make a few gentle efforts toward getting the conversation flowing on this subject, but if it seemed to threaten the whole interview, the conversation was shifted to other topics, and an attempt was made to re-open the subject later in the interview.

As a consequence of these unavoidable failures in interviewing, inadequate information was obtained about several really acute cases of emotional stress and personality disorganization associated with courtship and marriage. The statistics presented here probably understate the prevalence and intensity of courtship and marriage problems. The built-in bias is that if the factor is of critical importance, information is obtained in a lower percentage of cases, but if the factor is of less importance, information is more readily given.

## I. THE COURTSHIP EXPERIENCES OF NEVER-MARRIED HOMELESS MEN

Engagements (Table 16-1-A). — About 74 percent of the men who had never been married had never been engaged. The 26 percent who had been engaged reported that their engagements had been broken. This tends to cast doubt on the hypothesis that large numbers of single men retreat to Skid Row after failing to get the woman they want. Instead, it may suggest that a large share of the never-married men were underactive in courtship matters or else held unconventional ideas about marrying the women they courted. Among the once-engaged-but-never-married men, chronic alcoholics were much more prevalent than teetotalers or light drinkers. There was a tendency for men who had never been engaged to be non-drinkers or controlled drinkers.

Love, If Never Engaged (Table 16-1-B). — Probing further, the interviewers asked the large group of never-married and never-engaged men whether they had ever been in love. Approximately one-half said "Yes" and one-half said "No." Again the chronic alcoholics were more inclined to have taken an active interest in the opposite sex; the teetotalers and light drinkers tended to say that they had never fallen in love.

Together, these two questions lead to the conclusion that more of the chronic alcoholics led an active and normal courtship life than did the teetotalers and light drinkers, who appear to have been more repressed, timid, or disinterested. Among the entire group of chronic alcoholics for whom information is available, 92 percent claimed to have had some

definite heterosexual interest (had married, been engaged, or been in love), while among the teetotalers and light drinkers there were 78 percent who claimed to have had heterosexual interest.

Table 16-1. COURTSHIP HISTORY OF HOMELESS MEN: CHICAGO'S SKID ROW (Percent of men mentioning)

| Response | Total single men | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, dereliicts |
| A. WERE YOU EVER ENGAGED TO BE MARRIED? SINGLE MEN | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Yes | 25 | 20 | 19 | 36 |
| No | 74 | 80 | 81 | 60 |
| No information | 1 | ... | ... | 4 |
| B. WERE YOU EVER IN LOVE? SINGLE MEN, NEVER ENGAGED | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Yes | 47 | 36 | 56 | 63 |
| No | 47 | 55 | 40 | 34 |
| No information | 6 | 9 | 4 | 3 |
| C. WHY WAS THE ENGAGEMENT BROKEN? SINGLE MEN, ONCE ENGAGED | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Quarrel over drinking | 4 | 6 | ... | 3 |
| Quarrel other than drinking | 8 | 12 | ... | 8 |
| Feelings toward each other changed | 12 | 8 | ... | 10 |
| Respondent moved away and failed to write | 7 | ... | ... | 15 |
| Respondent moved away and girl found other boy-friend | 14 | 19 | ... | 15 |
| Drifted apart while in military service | 15 | 17 | ... | 19 |
| Girl's parents objected and convinced her it was unwise | 5 | 6 | ... | 5 |
| Fiancee died | 21 | 21 | ... | 10 |
| Other general reasons, no money, other family interfered | 11 | 12 | ... | 8 |
| No information | 2 | ... | ... | 5 |
| D. WHO BROKE THE ENGAGEMENT? SINGLE MEN, ONCE ENGAGED | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Respondent broke engagement | 35 | 36 | 15 | 41 |
| Girl broke engagement | 27 | 21 | 15 | 36 |
| Mutual agreement | 14 | 15 | 15 | 14 |
| Fiancee died | 21 | 21 | 55 | 10 |
| No information | 2 | 6 | ... | ... |

Reason for Broken Engagement (Table 16-1-C). — The one-fourth of the single men who had been engaged were asked how their engagement was broken. Following is a tabulation of the reasons given, in order of frequency:

| | Percent of all ever-engaged single men |
|---|---|
| Fiancee died | 21 |
| Drifted apart during military service | 15 |
| Respondent moved away, girl obtained another boy-friend | 14 |
| Feelings toward each other changed | 12 |
| Quarrels, reasons other than drinking | 8 |
| Respondent moved away, failed to write | 7 |
| Girl's parents forbade the marriage, interfered | 5 |
| Quarrels over respondent's drinking | 4 |

Some of those men who responded that their fiancees had died probably intended to avoid further questioning. When one searches the other responses for an explanation of why the men are on Skid Row, the results are rather disappointing. What is presented is a rather conventional set of reasons of the type one could expect from a cross-sectional survey of unmarried persons in the general population. At least one-half, and perhaps more, of the engagements were broken seemingly because the man lost interest in that particular girl or because he did not want to marry anyone.

Among the men with broken engagements, the reasons given did not differ a great deal by drinking status, except that comparatively few of the unmarried alcoholics repeated the "fiancee died" story.

Initiative in Breaking the Engagement (Table 16-1-D). — Excluding those who reported that the fiancee had died, only about 1 man in 3 said that the girl broke the engagement. In about one-half the cases, the man claimed he had initiated the separation or that it was by mutual agreement. This material on how seriously the men took their engagements tends to reinforce the idea that many of the men lost interest in the girl, or chose not to marry.

A higher percentage of the chronic alcoholics admitted that the girl suggested breaking the engagement than did the men who were teetotalers or light drinkers.

Reasons for Never Marrying (Table 16-2). — After obtaining the story of their engagements and love affairs, the interviewers asked all single men, "Why do you suppose you never got married?" A series of neutral probes helped establish the man's own interpretation of why he had never married. Following are the types of replies given, arranged in order of frequency of mention.

| | Percent of all never-married men |
|---|---|
| Stayed single from choice: did not want to get married | 35 |
| Could not afford to get married; income was not large enough | 32 |
| Could not interest a girl of the type he wanted | 20 |
| Was afraid marriage would not succeed for him. | 6 |
| Did not care for women, not interested in girls | 6 |
| Had to support other relatives (mother, sisters, etc.) | 4 |
| Knew his drinking would ruin a marriage | 2 |
| Did not know | 9 |

Unless these responses were pure rationalizations, the men made it clear that they had remained single either from preference, for economic reasons, or because they were unable to meet and win the kind of girl they wanted. Only a small minority (about 9 percent) had stayed single because they were afraid a marriage would fail. With the possible exception of men whose fiancees died, there was no evidence of heartbreak and life-long personality blight resulting from a broken engagement. Apparently the small percentage of single men who had been engaged did not regard the experience as a severe personal blow. Instead, the picture that emerges is that of men who have a rather low level of interest in marriage and perhaps even in sex, in comparison with the general male population.

Table 16-2. REASONS GIVEN BY HOMELESS MEN FOR NEVER MARRYING (Percent of single men mentioning, by drinking classification)

| Response | Total single men | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Knew his drinking would ruin a marriage | 2 | ... | ... | 8 |
| Had to support mother, brothers, sisters | 4 | 3 | 9 | 2 |
| Was afraid marriage would not succeed for him | 6 | 6 | 9 | 6 |
| Could not interest a girl of type he wanted | 20 | 22 | 16 | 19 |
| Could not afford, situations prevented | 32 | 32 | 29 | 32 |
| Did not want to get married, wanted to be single | 35 | 27 | 48 | 40 |
| Did not care for women, not interested in them | 6 | 11 | ... | ... |
| Does not know why he never married | 9 | 10 | 9 | 8 |
| No information | 9 | 10 | 9 | 8 |

Many of the never-married men on Skid Row are definitely ugly or have disfigured faces or unusual features that could have influenced the low degree of activity they show in courtship matters. Hence, just as the least employable members of the labor market tend to drift onto Skid Row, so the male leftovers of the marriage market may tend to come here, especially when they have low incomes and no social contacts.

Degree of Sexual Interest in Women (Table 16-3-A). — To help interpret the evidence concerning why unmarried homeless men had never been engaged or even in love, each was asked, "Do (did) women interest you much sexually?" One man in 14 failed to answer the question. Of the group which answered "Yes" or "No" (including the 18 percent who would answer only retrospectively because of age), 30 percent said "No." Teetotalers and light drinkers constituted the larger part of this group. Only 13 percent of the chronic alcoholics reported that they had no sexual interest in women. When considered with the other evidence about the engagements and love-affairs of chronic alcoholics, this constitutes a rather strong denial of the hypothesis sometimes suggested by psychiatrists that chronic alcoholics have strong homosexual tendencies. The evidence makes it far easier to believe that most of them have at least some heterosexual drive.

Table 16-3. SEX LIFE OF HOMELESS MEN: CHICAGO'S SKID ROW, WINTER, 1957-58

| Response | Total single men | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| A. DO (DID) WOMEN INTEREST YOU MUCH SEXUALLY? ALL SINGLE MEN | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| No | 28 | 37 | 29 | 13 |
| Yes | 52 | 44 | 46 | 69 |
| Used to but too old now | 13 | 12 | 16 | 12 |
| No information | 7 | 8 | 9 | 6 |
| B. HOW OFTEN DO YOU ASSOCIATE WITH WOMEN NOWADAYS? ALL SINGLE MEN | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Never | 57 | 65 | 61 | 40 |
| Yes, once per month | 7 | 5 | 11 | 9 |
| Yes, twice per month | 8 | 6 | 10 | 10 |
| Yes, three times per month | 2 | 2 | ... | 2 |
| Yes, four times per month | 8 | 5 | 1 | 18 |
| Yes, five times per month or more | 8 | 7 | 10 | 7 |
| Yes, times per month not specified | 10 | 9 | 6 | 13 |
| No information | 1 | 1 | ... | 1 |

Present Association with Women (Table 16-3-B). — To the question, "Do you associate with women nowadays?" more than one-half of the men said, "No." This includes those men who said they were too old. Most of the men interpreted this question as a polite way of asking if they were having intercourse. Hence, these statistics tend to indicate

LADY ASKING FOR A LIGHT

the proportion of men who meant to say they are currently heterosexually active. A much higher percentage of chronic alcoholics claimed to be sexually active than teetotalers and light drinkers. Their replies suggested that chronic alcoholics were more frequently active than the teetotalers and light drinkers. Almost two-thirds of the controlled drinkers said they do not associate with women nowadays, but only 40 percent of the chronic alcoholics said this.

On the one hand, these data indicate considerable disinterest, and perhaps nonparticipation, in sex. Quite probably there is no other type of community in the nation where fully one-fourth of the men claim no interest in sex and where more than one-half do not even seek the company of women. But these data also indicate that sex relations with women are not as rare among Skid Row men as many observers believe.

Attitudes toward Homosexuals (Table 16-4-A). — The large proportion of single men who showed no interest in sex, who do not associate with women, and who have never been in love, raises the question of homosexuality on Skid Row. The men were asked, "Some people say that some of the men living along West Madison Street (or other Skid Row area) have sex experiences with other men. How do you regard this?" In coding this material, it was assumed that respondents who showed either approval or extreme and violent disapproval would tend to have either active or latent homosexual tendencies, while most of those who showed mild dislike or disgust but not an extreme emotion in response to the question would not have such tendencies. About 2 percent of the men confessed approval of homosexuals, and 10 percent showed violent disgust and hatred. (It should not be asserted that all of those who gave a violently negative reaction toward homosexuals are themselves latent homosexuals. For example, a very high percentage of the widowed men reacted in this way.) Chronic alcoholics tended to show a little less tolerance for homosexuals than did the teetotalers and light drinkers.

Estimated Percentage of Homeless Men Who Are Homosexuals (Table 16-4-B). — The men were asked to estimate what percentage of the men on Skid Row had sex experiences with other men more or less regularly. A large share (32 percent) of the men pleaded ignorance. An additional 30 percent thought there were "almost none" or less than 5 percent. Among those who thought there was a significant number, the estimates varied all the way from 5 percent to more than 50 percent. In general, separated and divorced men estimated more homosexuals than did single men, and teetotalers and light drinkers gave higher estimates than did the chronic alcoholics.

From this material, the following tentative conclusions might be drawn regarding homosexuality:

a. There is a significant number of actively homosexual men on Skid Row. They constitute possibly about 10 percent of the men.

b. The general attitude toward homosexuals is only slightly less intolerant than it is in the general population, and the homosexuality that exists cannot be expressed openly.

c. Homosexuality probably is just as prevalent among the teetotalers and light drinkers as among the chronic alcoholics.

d. The hypothesis of homosexuality alone cannot account for all of the large number of single men who have never been engaged or in love who live on Skid Row.

Table 16-4. HOMOSEXUALS ON CHICAGO'S SKID ROW: WINTER, 1957-58

| Response | All homeless men | Marital status | | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Widowed | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| A. ATTITUDES OF HOMELESS MEN TOWARD HOMOSEXUALS. ALL HOMELESS MEN | | | | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| O.K. if they leave him alone, or indifferent | 22 | 25 | 21 | 16 | 24 | 18 | 22 |
| Likes them, they are O.K. | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 2 |
| Sorry for them, but does not like | 9 | 8 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 10 | 10 |
| Mild dislike, tolerates them if leave him alone | 26 | 26 | 27 | 26 | 25 | 24 | 27 |
| Moderate dislike, disgust, avoidance | 19 | 18 | 20 | 23 | 18 | 21 | 19 |
| Violent, extreme dislike, hatred | 11 | 10 | 12 | 16 | 11 | 12 | 10 |
| Something wrong with them mentally | 19 | 19 | 19 | 23 | 23 | 16 | 16 |
| Something wrong with them physically | 13 | 12 | 15 | 8 | 12 | 13 | 14 |
| Never had any experience with them | 4 | 5 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 4 |
| No information | 12 | 12 | 9 | 7 | 13 | 13 | 10 |
| B. ESTIMATE OF PROPORTION OF HOMELESS MEN WHO ARE HOMOSEXUAL. ALL HOMELESS MEN | | | | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Almost none | 20 | 22 | 19 | 16 | 20 | 19 | 20 |
| 1-4 percent | 11 | 14 | 8 | 8 | 11 | 10 | 11 |
| 5-9 percent | 6 | 4 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 8 | 8 |
| 10-14 percent | 6 | 7 | 6 | 6 | 4 | 4 | 10 |
| 15-19 percent | 1 | 1 | 2 | 2 | ... | 1 | 3 |
| 20-24 percent | 5 | 3 | 7 | 2 | 3 | 6 | 5 |
| 25-29 percent<br>30-39 percent or more<br>40-49 percent<br>50 percent | 10 | 9 | 14 | 18 | 11 | 13 | 12 |
| Does not know | 32 | 33 | 30 | 42 | 40 | 29 | 24 |
| No information | 7 | 6 | 5 | 4 | 7 | 10 | 5 |

Coders' Evaluation of Courtship and Sex History. — In order to integrate all of the material assembled concerning the courtship history and sex activities of the single men, the coders were asked to classify each respondent in one of the following seven categories:

| | Teetotalers and light drinkers (percent) | Heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts (percent) |
|---|---|---|
| Man was never engaged, never in love, not interested in women | 25 | 5 |
| Man was a heavy drinker, was afraid his marriage would fail | - | 21 |
| Man was engaged, but engagement broken | 17 | 25 |
| Man was never engaged, but once in love | 17 | 20 |
| Man was never engaged, never in love, but interested in women | 16 | 13 |
| Man led a merry life, active sexually, but not willing to marry | 10 | 8 |
| Man remained in parents' home, had family responsibilities, until too old to marry | 8 | 4 |
| Not enough information to classify. | 7 | 4 |

This classification, which takes account of several different variables at once, helps to clarify the picture somewhat. First, it shows that the single men on Skid Row have remained single for a variety of reasons and that these reasons vary according to the man's drinking behavior. The unmarried teetotaler or light drinker who lives on Skid Row shows definite signs of being sexually inert. One-quarter of these men reported that they had never been in love and confessed that women had not interested them. An additional 33 percent had never been engaged but said that women interested them or that they had once been in love. Only 10 percent could be classified as unwilling to marry but as having led an active sexual life. Since the evidence already presented makes it implausible that all of these men could be homosexual, it can be concluded only that a very large proportion of them have been comparatively inactive sexually during their lives. It is therefore tentatively concluded that one reason why many non-alcoholic, unmarried, low-income men live on Skid Row is that they have been undersexed, autosexual, or else sexually shy and repressed to the point of having had very little sexual expression throughout their lives.

The unmarried chronic alcoholics show a much higher level of sexual activity. Only 5 percent of this group had never been in love and had not been interested in women sexually. An additional 13 percent had been sufficiently active to have been interested in women but not to

have fallen in love. While larger proportions had been in love or had been engaged, one-fifth of the single alcoholics said they had never married because they feared their drinking would ruin the marriage.

The majority appeared to belong to that body of physically active, super-manly men who throughout history have preferred prostitutes and other casual female relationships to a wife. As yet the psychiatrists and psychologists have not studied these men adequately. They are found in many occupations where great physical exertion, strength, and courage are "normal": armies, forest industries, cattle ranching, mining in remote areas, navies, crews of merchant ships, waterfront industries and heavy construction projects. Among such men, effeminacy and homosexuality are ostensibly despised, and virility and heterosexual conquest are prized. Also, among these men heavy drinking is a tradition. Research is needed to determine the extent to which this whole outlook is based on subconscious fear of sexual inadequacy.

## II. PREVIOUS FAMILY LIFE OF MEN WHO ARE SEPARATED OR DIVORCED

Duration of Marriages (Table 16-5-A). — The marriages contracted by homeless men were not dissolved quickly. Seven years was the median duration of marriage for the men who were separated or divorced. The proportion of Skid Row men's marriages dissolved during the first year is probably no greater than in the general population — 85 percent lasted two years or more. Eleven percent lasted twenty years or more. This is evidence that the couples made an effort to make their marriages work and gave up only after months or years of trial. Therefore, these separations and divorces were not the actions of tempestuous young people but of couples approaching middle age, very often with young or adolescent children in the household. In many cases, it appears that the men stayed with their wives until the children were grown and then deserted to Skid Row.

Home Life (Table 16-5-B). — About two-thirds of the men claimed that at first the marriage was happy and well-adjusted but that quarrels and troubles occurred later. Almost one-fourth reported that the marriage was never well-adjusted and that there was trouble almost from the start. A very few of the separated and divorced men (6 percent) insisted their marriage had always been well-adjusted, calm, happy, and normal. A few of these men were only temporarily separated from their wives while searching for work in the city, or while on a "lost weekend" spree on Skid Row. Some were men who projected the blame for their marital troubles upon relatives or other persons. Trouble tended to crop up early in the marriage more frequently for men who were chronic alcoholics than for men who were teetotalers or light drinkers.

Table 16-5. MARRIAGE HISTORY OF EVER-MARRIED HOMELESS MEN

| Response | Separated and divorced | | | | Widowed, total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Teeto-talers, light drinkers | Mod-erate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, dere-licts | |
| A. NUMBER OF YEARS EVER-MARRIED MEN LIVED WITH THEIR WIVES | | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Less than one year | 7 | 6 | 6 | 9 | 7 |
| 1 year | 6 | 9 | 5 | 6 | 7 |
| 2 years | 10 | 10 | 14 | 8 | 7 |
| 3-4 years | 13 | 15 | 9 | 14 | 13 |
| 5-6 years | 9 | 9 | 16 | 5 | 5 |
| 7-9 years | 17 | 13 | 23 | 16 | 9 |
| 10-14 years | 15 | 11 | 9 | 21 | 13 |
| 15-19 years | 11 | 14 | 7 | 11 | 14 |
| 20-24 years or more | 11 | 12 | 10 | 10 | 24 |
| No information | 1 | 1 | ... | 1 | 2 |
| B. HOW WAS YOUR HOME LIFE? | | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Well-adjusted, calm, happy, normal | 6 | 6 | 9 | 4 | 75 |
| Well-adjusted, followed by quarrels, trouble | 63 | 63 | 69 | 60 | 9 |
| Never well-adjusted from start | 24 | 23 | 18 | 27 | 2 |
| No information or not enough to classify | 8 | 8 | 5 | 9 | 13 |
| C. WHAT KIND OF WIFE WAS SHE? | | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Very good wife | 16 | 7 | 25 | 20 | 46 |
| Good wife | 40 | 40 | 43 | 38 | 41 |
| Neither unusually good or bad | 24 | 23 | 21 | 27 | 2 |
| Bad wife | 10 | 17 | 9 | 4 | 2 |
| Very bad wife | 4 | 5 | ... | 5 | ... |
| No information | 6 | 8 | 2 | 6 | 8 |

Wives of Homeless Men (Table 16-5-C). — Despite the fact that they were estranged, only 14 percent of the men would declare that the spouse had been a bad wife, and only 4 percent accused her of being "very bad." More than 50 percent rated their wives either "good" or "very good"; almost one-fourth of the men were neutral and stated that their wives had been neither unusually good nor unusually bad. The chronic alcoholics were generally less critical and more appreciative of the virtues of their estranged wives than were the teetotalers and light drinkers.

Positive Traits of Wives (Table 16-6-A). — Almost every man was able to specify at least one trait of his wife which he liked, even though he tended to be quite vague about it. The traits mentioned, in order of frequency, were:

Good housekeeper . . . . . 39 percent
Nice personality . . . . . 22 percent
Good mother to children . . . . . 19 percent
Pretty, sexually attractive . . . . . 16 percent
Vague but positive . . . . . 18 percent

These ratings did not vary much according to drinking classification; however, few of the alcoholics rated their wives as pretty or sexually attractive, and emphasized instead their virtues as mothers.

Table 16-6. LIKED AND DISLIKED TRAITS OF THE WIFE

| Response | Separated and divorced | | | | Widowed, total |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts | |
| A. WHAT DID YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT YOUR WIFE? | | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Was pretty, sexually attractive | 16 | 16 | 23 | 12 | 9 |
| Nice personality, easy to get along with | 22 | 22 | 21 | 23 | 43 |
| Good mother to children | 19 | 17 | 12 | 24 | 13 |
| Good wife to him (vague, gen'l) | 11 | 10 | 9 | 14 | 15 |
| Was good housekeeper, good cook | 39 | 41 | 35 | 40 | 50 |
| Helped him in his work | 3 | 3 | 2 | 4 | 2 |
| General and vague likes | 18 | 21 | 20 | 16 | 10 |
| Nothing mentioned as liked | 4 | 6 | 2 | 4 | ... |
| No information | 9 | 9 | 7 | 10 | 9 |
| B. WHAT DID YOU DISLIKE ABOUT YOUR WIFE? | | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Was not pretty, did not keep herself up | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| Was a poor mother, did not care for children | 2 | 1 | 2 | 2 | ... |
| Was a poor housekeeper, poor cook | 7 | 6 | 7 | 9 | 2 |
| Was restless, on the go, drank too much | 28 | 42 | 17 | 21 | 5 |
| Was extravagant, spent more than they could afford | 7 | 10 | 5 | 5 | 5 |
| Nagged, complained, argued | 21 | 17 | 22 | 25 | 9 |
| Was cold, not enough interest in sex | 3 | 6 | ... | 3 | ... |
| Put on airs, thought she was better than others | 2 | 1 | ... | 2 | ... |
| General, vague dislikes | 10 | 11 | 9 | 15 | 4 |
| Nothing mentioned as disliked | 28 | 20 | 44 | 26 | 65 |
| No information | 7 | 5 | 5 | 9 | 13 |

Negative Traits of Wives (Table 16-6-B). — Even though the interviewers tried hard to make the men see that "nobody is perfect" and "everybody has at least one fault," 28 percent of the men refused to name anything they disliked about their estranged wives. In the cases where a criticism was voiced, two general statements dominated all of

the others: (a) She was always restless, always on the go (28 percent) and (b) She nagged and complained, argued all of the time (21 percent). A few men complained that their wives were poor housekeepers, were extravagant; that they were frigid and not interested in sex; that they "put on airs" and thought they were better than other people; or were poor mothers and neglected their children. These, however, were only secondary and minor complaints in comparison with the two major criticisms. The teetotalers or light drinkers tended to cite restlessness as the trait they disliked most in their wives. Chronic alcoholics, on the other hand, more often mentioned nagging, complaining, and arguing as the traits they disliked most.

Blame for Separation or Divorce (Table 16-7-A). — When asked which party was primarily at fault for the separation, 40 percent of the men frankly shouldered the blame. Only one-third placed the blame completely on the wife, while about 10 percent thought that neither or both were at fault. Relatives were blamed in 3 percent of the cases, and 10 percent of the men failed or refused to answer. The chronic alcoholics accepted responsibility for their marital failures more than twice as often as did the teetotalers and light drinkers. Only one-fourth of the non-alcoholics thought they were primarily at fault, although a sizable proportion admitted that both husband and wife were at fault.

Cause of Separation or Divorce (Table 16-7-B). — When asked to specify the cause of separation or divorce, the men listed the following as major causes:

| | |
|---|---|
| Quarrels over matters other than drinking | 43 percent |
| Drinking by the respondent | 27 percent |
| Wife's infidelity | 25 percent |
| Husband's infidelity | 5 percent |

Incompatibility, independent of drinking, was rated as the leading cause of dissolution of marriage among Skid Row men. Among chronic alcoholics, however, the man's drinking was cited as the major cause and explained almost one-half of the cases.

Infidelity of the wife was given as the cause for one-fourth of the broken marriages. It was mentioned even more frequently by the teetotalers and light drinkers than by the chronic alcoholics. If it is based on fact this could furnish insight concerning why many men are on Skid Row. Few events can happen in the life of an American male that will torture his ego more and make him feel more disgraced in the eyes of others, than to discover his wife is unfaithful. Homicide and suicide commonly result from this situation, and men in this position may incur lifelong personality effects. It is quite plausible that many men retreat to Skid Row for this reason.

On the other hand, many of this group may have attributed unfaithfulness to their wives in an attempt to reverse a negative feeling about

their own behavior as husbands. In some cases it might be supposed that unfaithfulness on their own part in the marriage is reflected in this judgment on their wives. However, a careful reading of these interviews seems to confirm, in many cases, the statements of the men that their wives were unfaithful. The breaking up of the marriage may still have been caused by both partners, because infidelity of the wife may have resulted from certain personality traits or sexual incompetence on the part of the husband.

Table 16-7. CIRCUMSTANCES OF SEPARATION AND DIVORCE OF HOMELESS MEN

| Response | Total separated and divorced | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| A. WHO WAS TO BLAME FOR THE SEPARATION OR DIVORCE? | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Wife was to blame | 33 | 47 | 22 | 27 |
| Respondent was to blame | 40 | 25 | 39 | 53 |
| Both at fault | 8 | 12 | 9 | 2 |
| Neither, just incompatible | 2 | 1 | 5 | 2 |
| Relatives | 3 | 1 | 7 | 3 |
| No information | 10 | 8 | 14 | 9 |
| Separated temporarily: work, living conditions | 4 | 6 | 4 | 3 |
| B. WHAT WAS THE CAUSE OF YOUR SEPARATION OR DIVORCE? | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Temporary because of work | 3 | 6 | 2 | 2 |
| Respondent's drinking | 27 | 10 | 25 | 43 |
| Wife was unfaithful | 25 | 38 | 10 | 22 |
| Respondent was unfaithful | 5 | 3 | 7 | 6 |
| Quarreling other than drinking | 43 | 45 | 51 | 37 |
| "Lost weekend," not estranged | 2 | ... | 2 | 3 |
| Wife's drinking | 2 | 3 | 2 | ... |
| No information | 11 | 10 | 16 | 8 |

Coders' Evaluation of Causes for Separation or Divorce (Table 16-8). — The coders were asked to review the entire marital history of each man and to categorize it into one of five broad classes. The results of this evaluation are as follows:

| | Percent teetotalers and light drinkers | Percent heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts |
|---|---|---|
| Marriages broken by drinking | | |
| Total | 11[1] | 47 |
| Marriage unstable from beginning, due to drinking | 1 | 12 |
| Marriage happy at first, later broken due to drinking | 10 | 35 |
| Marriage broken by incompatibility (other than drinking) | | |
| Total | 75 | 41 |
| Marriage unstable from beginning, due to incompatibility | 25 | 16 |
| Marriage happy at first, later broken due to incompatibility | 50 | 25 |
| Marriages normally happy, still in effect, separation temporary | 6 | 4 |

[1] These are men who said they were once heavy drinkers but who were teetotalers at the time of the interview.

The coders were not asked to judge the validity of the claim that the wife was unfaithful but were instructed to classify it simply as "incompatibility." If the respondents' reports were unbiased, and if the coders' subjective interpretations were correct, it should be concluded that basic incompatibility, independent of drinking, was responsible

Table 16-8. CODER'S EVALUATION OF RESPONDENT'S MARRIAGE

| Evaluation | Total separated and divorced | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Marriage normally happy, still in effect, separation temporary | 4 | 6 | 4 | 4 |
| Marriage first happy, later broken due to his drinking | 22 | 10 | 20 | 35 |
| Marriage first happy, later broken due to incompatibility | 37 | 50 | 39 | 25 |
| Marriage unstable from beginning due to drinking | 7 | 1 | 5 | 12 |
| Marriage unstable from beginning due to incompatibility | 20 | 25 | 18 | 16 |
| Not enough information to classify | 10 | 8 | 14 | 9 |

for the dissolution of the majority of marriages of Skid Row men. Even among the chronic alcoholics, incompatibility for reasons other than drinking was only slightly less important than the husband's drinking.

As has been admitted, the interviewers were able to obtain only one side of the story. There is no way of determining how closely the basic material corresponds to fact. Even allowing a generous margin for bias, however, the impression remains that many men are on Skid Row because of an unhappy marital situation. It is suggested that the reactions of Skid Row men to their unsuccessful marriages may be an important factor in their drinking.

## III. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Single Men. — It appears that the sizable concentration of single men on Skid Row contains a large group of undersexed or sexually shy men who, although not active homosexuals, have a very low level of interest in women and no desire for marriage. In addition, there appears to be a small but significant proportion of active homosexuals. In both of these groups chronic alcoholism is less prevalent than among the Skid Row population generally. Among the never-married, a disproportionately large share of those who are active sexually are chronic alcoholics. Some of these believe they would fail in marriage because of their drinking. Among unmarried men on Skid Row there is a positive correlation between alcoholism and interest in women.

Separated and Divorced Men. — It appears that many of the separated and divorced men flee to the Skid Row environment in confusion and disorganization as a rather direct result of the failure of their marriages. Skid Row houses several hundred men who do not drink excessively and who appear to have come there as a result of a broken marriage caused by incompatibility for reasons other than drinking. This is the reason given for about 75 percent of all separations or divorces.

Heavy drinking is the basic reason for the dissolution of at least one-half of the marriages of separated or divorced alcoholics on Skid Row. Other factors that may have been present are: (a) unfaithfulness of the wife, (b) nagging, complaining, or arguing by the wife, (c) restlessness, unhappiness of the wife, and (d) other basic incompatibilities. In many of these cases the man admits he was primarily responsible for the breakup of the marriage. But it appears that in the interaction of husband and wife over these difficulties, the personality of the man undergoes disorganization, and drinking increases. The act of separation and the events that precede it seem to encourage the man's drinking to become uncontrollable, and he eventually comes to Skid Row.

*Chapter 17*

## *THE PERSONALITY STRUCTURE OF SKID ROW MEN*

Family backgrounds and the courtship and marital histories of Skid Row men were explored in the two preceding chapters. In this chapter we will examine the personality traits of the men, a third factor that may help to explain why homeless men are on Skid Row. These traits, which vary from one individual to another and are not themselves to be wholly explained in terms of differences in family background and courtship or marriage experiences, may be related to the presence of the men on Skid Row. The interviews that were conducted with homeless men made a special effort to get at this particular set of factors.

### A NOTE ON METHODOLOGY

Before these findings are presented, however, it is necessary to take note of some important limitations of the survey-type interview as a means of developing valid data on the personality traits of individuals.

The basic personality characteristics of individuals cannot be discovered and measured in a refined way by simple, direct questions of the type common in social surveys. They assume a kind and degree of self-knowledge which individuals seldom possess. They also assume a degree of frankness which respondents are seldom willing to give. But in the one-shot, survey-type interview, the researcher need not be limited to such simple, direct questions; nor, when he does use direct questions, does he need to take the answers at their face value. In any case, he should not depend upon any one or two questions to provide a basis for assessing the more complex and often quite subtle aspects of a respondent's personality.

In the interview schedule administered to our sample of homeless men, batteries of questions were used, some direct and some indirect, some open and some closed, and some designed merely to open up a field of inquiry which was then explored through intensive, non-directive probing. The technique was to question each respondent in such a way and to such an extent that a fairly large and varied sample of his behavior (verbal and non-verbal) was evoked. Thus, many of the questions were not intended primarily to elicit factual information or categorical self-

judgments but to stimulate a flow of conversation about some aspect or area of the respondent's experience.

In recent years there has been a great deal of experimentation in survey research with the use of projective techniques to obtain information of a kind that clinical psychologists use in an assessment of basic personality traits or conditions. This experimentation has included not only the use of thematic apperception test items, but also the use of short descriptions of hypothetical situations about which the respondent is asked to state his views or to anticipate what his reactions would likely be if he himself were actually involved in such a situation. In the exploratory and pretest phases of the present study, devices of this type were tried, with very discouraging results. The fact that they did not work was thought to be due to a combination of several different factors:

a. The homeless man was already involved in a situation of personality stress far more acute and dramatic than most of the situations that could be simply portrayed by pictures or hypothetical stories. Most of the situations into which the man might be asked to project himself would seem better or more normal to him than the situation in which he was actually involved. Many situations that would be useful projective tests in other circumstances seemed puerile or indirect mocking of the homeless man.
b. Many of the homeless men seemed incapable of "projecting" easily. Their inability to imagine themselves in another situation where they would be completely free of the Skid Row element, their short attention-span, and their inability to understand or remember all of the significant details of a projective device, appeared to underlie this incapacity.
c. Another important element was disinterest. The men were generally highly egocentric and hence were quite anxious to talk about themselves, but acted as if they had far too much trouble of their own to care very much about "the man in the picture" or "what Mr. Jones should do" about the situation in which he was involved. In short, early in the study it appeared that as long as the interview concentrated on the man himself and his own present situation and problems (or the background of these problems) the respondent tended to be lively, spontaneous, and confident; but when projective techniques were introduced into the interview, the man became confused and self-conscious and often thought that the interviewer was "playing games" with him. Rapport fell rapidly, the man seeming to conclude that the interviewer really did not understand what the Skid Row situation was like after all.

Perhaps this limitation on the method of collecting personality data might have been largely overcome had it been possible to have trained clinical psychologists study these men. But even if the cost had not been prohibitive, there would have been no way of getting our sample of homeless men on Skid Row to cooperate, and probably few clinical psychologists are willing to spend the endless hours in Skid Row hotels that would have been required. Whether or not they could have circumvented the obstructive factors mentioned above is, of course, not known.

The method which was used represents a compromise with the realities of the situation. Instead of using projective-type devices, a great deal of experimental effort went into the development of questions that would encourage the respondent to give a full and free expression of his thoughts and feelings about himself and about important aspects of his life situation.

By rigorous selection and training of interviewers, with persistent emphasis on the importance of establishing rapport with this particular type of respondent, an effort was made to approximate, as closely as could be, given the limitations set forth above, the diagnostic clinical interview. Interviewers who were not quite able to elicit a high degree of confidence and trust on the part of respondents were replaced.

Similar care had to be taken in the coding and analytical phases of the study in order to derive from the recorded responses a reasonably accurate classification of important personality differences among the homeless men. Two procedures suggested themselves at this point: statistical and clinical. The statistical procedure requires the development of a quantitative index or scale-rating of each respondent with respect to each of the several personality items deemed to be relevant for purposes of the study. The clinical approach requires that the coders perform substantially the same mental tasks as those performed by the clinical psychologist when he makes a diagnosis. Thus, the coders are instructed to examine the materials developed in the interviews, taking into account every bit of information available in order to arrive at the correct classification of each relevant aspect of the respondent's personality. This approach places a heavy responsibility on the coders.[1] In this chapter both procedures are used.

Graduate students in sociology or psychology who have had formal training in social psychology and/or psychology were employed as the clinical coders. They were carefully coached on the type of classification that was to be undertaken. Their first coding efforts were checked by the study director and supervisors to make sure they were following identical definitions. Coders were repeatedly instructed to make each classification independently of the other classifications. Special emphasis was placed upon the necessity of keeping both the marital status and

drinking classifications independent of categories indicating neurotic, psychotic or other traits.

As was emphasized above, the clinical approach to survey interviewing yielded results that were only rough approximations of what might have been achieved under real clinical conditions; it must also be emphasized that the clinical approach to coding these materials could be expected to yield only rough approximations of the diagnoses that would have been made by professional clinical psychologists. Moreover, the coders were robbed of the rich information of facial expression, tone of voice, and other nonverbal aspects of the interview.

If this clinical approach to survey research were to be carried to its highest point of refinement, it would call for carefully-selected and highly-trained persons to obtain an interview and then immediately to code it. The experience gained on this project indicates very strongly that graduate students in sociology and psychology can be taught the techniques of clinical psychology well enough to accomplish this with a usefully high level of reliability and validity.

## BASIC PERSONALITY TRAITS PRESENT IN BOYHOOD

While he was describing his family background, the man was asked the following question: "What kind of a person were you when you were 15-20 years old? (Probe: What other traits did you have?)" After all the man had to say about himself had been recorded in full, he was then subjected to eleven additional probes, each dealing with one aspect of personality:

a. Were you happy or unhappy? (What kinds of things bothered you?)
b. Did you know then for sure what you wanted to be? (What were your ideas about what you wanted to be then?)
c. Were you a hard worker, or were you inclined to be easy-going on the job?
d. Were you restless and always wanting to be on the go? (In what way?)
e. Did you have a lot of friends, only a few friends, or were you more of a "lone wolf"?
f. How did you spend your free time?
g. Did you date girls before you were 20 years old? (If "Yes": How often?)
h. Did you have any close friends who were boys?
i. Did you run around a lot with a gang of boys?
j. Did you have a reputation for having a quick temper? (If "Yes": What kinds of things made you flare up? How angry did you get?)

k. Did you ever get into trouble with the police in your youth? (If "Yes": What kinds of troubles did you have? Were you arrested? Were you sent to a reformatory or a prison?)

All of the information furnished by the man was pooled, together with all the material available in other parts of the interview, and the coder was asked to identify whether the respondent did or did not have each of several specific personality traits in his youth. The resulting statistics represent then the coder's interpretation of what the man said he was like. These traits were divided into two groups: "positive" traits, which theoretically should have helped to keep the man off Skid Row and away from chronic alcoholism, and "negative" traits, which theoretically might be expected to predispose him toward a Skid Row career. Table 17-1 reports the percentage of homeless men having each trait by marital status or drinking classification.

Following is a list of positive traits claimed by so many Skid Row men that it must be concluded that alone they are comparatively ineffective in keeping a man off Skid Row:

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| Was happy in youth | 81 |
| Had no trouble with police | 80 |
| Had close friends who were boys | 79 |
| Was a steady worker, good worker | 77 |
| Did not have a reputation for a quick temper | 70 |
| Had many friends, or a few very good friends | 65 |

Their image of themselves is that of having been happy, even-tempered, law-abiding, with normal or above-average willingness to work, and with many friends. It will be recalled from Chapter 15 they also said they were from normally happy homes where both parents had many admirable characteristics.

However, holding marital status constant, a smaller percentage of the men who were chronic alcoholics were inclined to report these positive traits than were the men who were light or nondrinkers. The items concerning friends tend to show no difference with respect to alcoholism.

The men who claimed these positive traits were more frequently men who had attempted marriage (especially widowers) than single men.

Table 17-1. POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE PERSONALITY TRAITS POSSESSED BY HOMELESS MEN IN THEIR YOUTH (Percent of men possessing each trait)

| Positive traits in youth | All homeless men | Marital status | | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Widowed | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| A. POSITIVE TRAITS, total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Happy | 81 | 80 | 86 | 88 | 85 | 74 | 83 |
| Had definite occupational goal | 42 | 37 | 47 | 51 | 41 | 42 | 44 |
| Hard worker, good (steady) worker | 77 | 75 | 82 | 86 | 86 | 67 | 73 |
| Was not restless | 44 | 40 | 47 | 56 | 56 | 42 | 28 |
| Had many friends or a few very good friends | 64 | 61 | 70 | 70 | 63 | 60 | 71 |
| Dated girls, more than one time per week | 36 | 25 | 48 | 38 | 28 | 36 | 49 |
| Dated girls, one to four times per month | 31 | 35 | 27 | 36 | 31 | 29 | 31 |
| Had close friends who were boys | 79 | 79 | 83 | 85 | 79 | 75 | 83 |
| Did not run around with a gang | 58 | 57 | 61 | 68 | 68 | 54 | 48 |
| Did not have reputation for quick temper | 70 | 76 | 72 | 61 | 78 | 66 | 62 |
| Did not have trouble with police | 80 | 82 | 81 | 86 | 88 | 73 | 74 |
| No information | 6 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 15 | 4 |
| B. NEGATIVE TRAITS, total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Not happy | 5 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 |
| Did not have definite occupational goal | 50 | 56 | 50 | 43 | 54 | 42 | 51 |
| Not a hard worker, inclined to loaf, take it easy | 12 | 16 | 11 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 19 |
| Was restless | 43 | 47 | 45 | 32 | 32 | 40 | 62 |
| Did not have many friends, "lone wolf" type | 8 | 7 | 10 | 3 | 10 | 6 | 7 |
| Had only a few friends | 20 | 27 | 16 | 23 | 23 | 19 | 17 |
| Did not date girls | 25 | 33 | 20 | 22 | 37 | 18 | 14 |
| Had no close friends who were boys | 12 | 14 | 13 | 11 | 16 | 9 | 10 |
| Ran with a gang | 32 | 37 | 31 | 28 | 26 | 28 | 43 |
| Had reputation for quick temper | 23 | 19 | 25 | 34 | 18 | 19 | 34 |
| Had some trouble with police | 14 | 13 | 16 | 10 | 9 | 11 | 22 |
| No information | 6 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 15 | 4 |

When the list of negative traits of Table 17-1 is considered, it could be hypothesized that several of them might predispose a man to migrate to Skid Row, because their proportion among homeless men seems to be much higher than could be expected for the general population:

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| Did not have a definite occupational goal | 50 |
| Was restless, always on the go | 43 |
| Ran with a gang | 32 |
| Did not date girls | 25 |
| Had a quick temper | 23 |
| Had only a few friends or no close friends | 20 |
| Had some trouble with the police | 14 |

The top three items on this list, when taken together, are most revealing. Fully one-half of the homeless men, almost all with average or better intelligence, could not recall ever having "wanted to be something" (even a fireman or a policeman) as a boy. Instead, they were filled with unchanneled energy expressed through restless wanderlust and running with a gang.

The men who remained single possessed the following negative traits to an extraordinary extent, in comparison with ever-married men:

a. Had no occupational goal
b. Was restless
c. Ran with a gang
d. Did not date girls
e. Had only a few friends

In comparison with non-alcoholic Skid Row men, those who later became chronic alcoholics possessed the following traits to an unusual degree, holding marital status constant:

a. Was restless
b. Ran with a gang
c. Had a quick temper
d. Had some trouble with the police
e. Was not a hard worker, was inclined to loaf

Free-Time Activities In Youth (Table 17-2). — Eleven percent of the homeless men said they had little or no free time for recreation during their youth. For the vast majority who did have time for recreation, the most popular activities were outdoor sports such as hunting or fishing, going to the movies, and dating. Yet 12 percent said they loafed in taverns or poolhalls or associated with rough people, and 6 percent said they loafed on street-corners. In comparison with ever-married men, the bachelors tended to exhibit the following leisure-time traits to an unusual degree:

a. Had no free time for recreation
b. Did not participate in sports or outdoor activities
c. Engaged in indoor activities such as reading, music
d. Did not date girls

Chronic alcoholics exhibited the following leisure-time traits more frequently than did non-alcoholics, holding marital status constant:

a. Loafed in taverns, associated with rough people
b. Loafed on street-corners
c. Participated in sports
d. Attended sports events
e. Attended the movies
f. Dated girls more than once per week

Table 17-2. LEISURE-TIME ACTIVITIES OF HOMELESS MEN DURING THEIR YOUTH (Percent of men having each activity)

| Leisure-time activities in youth | All homeless men | Marital status | | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Widowed | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| TOTAL | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Had little or no free time. | 11 | 14 | 10 | 4 | 13 | 12 | 7 |
| Participated in sports | 42 | 36 | 46 | 53 | 42 | 37 | 45 |
| Observed sports | 8 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 10 | 5 | 10 |
| Outdoor activities, hunting, fishing, etc | 37 | 32 | 40 | 46 | 36 | 41 | 33 |
| Movies | 25 | 24 | 26 | 31 | 22 | 25 | 28 |
| Indoor activities, reading, music, games, church, family | 17 | 20 | 14 | 22 | 18 | 16 | 17 |
| Loafing on street-corners, lazy | 6 | 8 | 6 | ... | 6 | 3 | 8 |
| Loafing in taverns, poolhalls, associating with rough people | 12 | 9 | 14 | 10 | 6 | 10 | 20 |
| Went to parties, dating, dances | 20 | 16 | 23 | 30 | 16 | 23 | 25 |
| Other, studied | 1 | 1 | 1 | ... | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Boys' clubs, worked on cars, machinery | 2 | 1 | 3 | ... | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| No information | 11 | 11 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 20 | 7 |

Summary. — The general picture of the homeless man as a boy is that he was happy and well-adjusted but that he lacked occupational orientation, was restless, and ran with a gang. His free-time activity was of a physically active or "thrilling" type, with very little emphasis on vocational or avocational preparation. Those of this group who were more withdrawn, who did not date girls, or who had less free time because of the necessity to work, ended by coming to Skid Row as bachelors but not as alcoholics. Those who dated girls often, were quick-tempered, had

trouble with the police, were inclined to be a little lazy, and/or who loafed on street-corners and in taverns, are those who later tended to become chronic alcoholics on Skid Row.

## MENTAL ABILITIES OF SKID ROW MEN

It was impossible, of course, to measure exactly the mental ability of the homeless men. A rough attempt was made, however, by giving two very short tests, an arithmetic test and a word test, as follows:

Arithmetic Test — Here are some problems like they used to give you in school. See if you can remember them:

a. 3 x 3 =
b. 9 x 9 =
c. 6 + 4 + 9 =
d. 11 x 11 =
e. 56 ÷ 7 =

Word Test — And here are some words they used to teach you in reading. Do you still remember what they mean?

| | Level of Ability |
|---|---|
| a. eyelash<br>roar<br>scorch | DEFICIENT |
| b. muzzle<br>haste | BORDERLINE |
| c. lecture<br>Mars<br>skill | DULL |
| d. juggler<br>brunette<br>regard | AVERAGE |
| e. lotus<br>incrustation<br>achromatic | SUPERIOR |

This test was adopted, without change, from the Department of Psychiatry, Municipal Court of the city of Chicago. The ratings of the level of mental ability indicated by the test were also adopted without change. It was not possible to administer these tests to a substantial share of the men. Several men of foreign birth were literate only in a language other than English. Several men refused to try because they were afraid they could not succeed.

At the time the interview was conducted, the interviewer was asked to

rate the respondent's intelligence, independently of the test results, in one of the following categories:

a. Superior intelligence (should have gone to college)
b. Quick, alert, intelligent
c. Average
d. Dull, borderline intelligence
e. Deficient — feeble-minded, moronic

These three sets of information are presented in Tables 17-3-A, B, C.

Arithmetic Score. — With respect to the arithmetic score, almost one-fourth of the men who were asked the questions were able to get all of the answers correct. An additional one-fourth missed only one. Only one-fourth were so poor at arithmetic that they were able to get none or only one item correct. This would suggest that roughly one-half of the men remembered their third-grade arithmetic adequately, even though they may have had little occasion to use it for a long time. But at least

Table 17-3. MENTAL ABILITY OF HOMELESS MEN AS DETERMINED BY ARITHMETIC TEST, READING TEST, INTERVIEWER'S RATING, AND ENJOYMENT OF SCHOOL

| Score | All homeless men | Marital status | | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Widowed | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| A. ARITHMETIC TEST, total.. | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| None or one correct..... | 14 | 14 | 12 | 19 | 15 | 15 | 11 |
| Two or three correct.... | 31 | 19 | 33 | 37 | 32 | 27 | 33 |
| Four or five correct.... | 43 | 42 | 49 | 30 | 37 | 46 | 49 |
| No information*..... | 12 | 14 | 6 | 15 | 16 | 13 | 6 |
| B. READING TEST, total..... | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Deficient..... | 6 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| Borderline..... | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Dull..... | 11 | 10 | 12 | 15 | 14 | 8 | 10 |
| Average..... | 26 | 27 | 27 | 20 | 25 | 24 | 28 |
| Above average..... | 33 | 30 | 37 | 31 | 24 | 39 | 40 |
| Superior..... | 6 | 5 | 8 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 8 |
| No information*..... | 17 | 20 | 8 | 23 | 24 | 16 | 8 |
| C. INTERVIEWERS' RATING, total..... | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Deficient..... | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | ... |
| Dull, borderline..... | 18 | 20 | 17 | 12 | 21 | 14 | 17 |
| Average..... | 48 | 47 | 45 | 61 | 48 | 52 | 43 |
| Quick, alert..... | 24 | 23 | 27 | 20 | 21 | 22 | 29 |
| Superior..... | 7 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 8 | 8 |
| Not able to evaluate.... | 2 | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| D. ENJOYMENT OF SCHOOL, total..... | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Yes..... | 65 | 56 | 73 | 76 | 67 | 64 | 62 |
| No..... | 27 | 36 | 24 | 18 | 26 | 21 | 34 |
| Did not go to school.... | 3 | 4 | ... | 6 | 5 | 1 | ... |
| No information..... | 6 | 4 | 3 | ... | 2 | 14 | 4 |

*Includes men with some language handicap, educated in other countries.

one-fourth of the men were unmistakably deficient even at this simple level, and an additional one-fourth were "weak." About 14 percent were mathematically illiterate, being able to answer none or only the item "3 x 3."

Reading Score. — Only about one-fifth of the men were rated as below-average on the reading test, while about 40 percent were rated as above-average or superior. An additional one-fourth were rated as average.

Interviewers' Ratings of Personality Adjustment. — At the conclusion a little less generous in their estimates of mental ability than the tests. Instead of rating only 8 percent as being "dull" or "borderline," they rated 18 percent in one or the other of these categories, almost all in the "dull" category. They rated almost one-half as being "average" and more than 30 percent as being above-average in intelligence. Thus, all three forms of evidence agreed that the average mental ability of Skid Row men is roughly the same as that of the general population or even slightly above, and that only 15-20 percent of the men are dull, borderline, or deficient in their mental ability. Certainly this level of intelligence is not below that of unskilled workingmen who do not live on Skid Row. It is not the lack of brainpower, apparently, that is primarily responsible for most of the men's being on Skid Row.

The bachelors of Skid Row showed a lower level of mental ability than the ever-married men. They scored lower on the two tests, and the interviewers tended to rate fewer of them in the "superior" or "above-average" group. However, the widowers tended to rate even lower in mental ability than did either the single or the separated and divorced men, by all three measures.

In comparison with nonalcoholics on Skid Row, the chronic alcoholics rated definitely higher in mental ability. This was a consistent relationship in all three measures, with differences in marital status constant. Therefore, not only are Skid Row men of average or above-average intelligence, but the chronic alcoholics are generally more intelligent than the teetotalers and light drinkers. It is clear that with respect to mental ability, at least 80 percent of the homeless men would have been capable of holding down a good job and performing as any other member of society if other factors had not been involved. This is a highly positive factor that should be taken into account in planning for their rehabilitation.

Did the Men Enjoy School? (Table 17-3-D). — About two-thirds of the men who answered this question said that they did enjoy school. In view of the lower average mental ability of the Skid Row bachelors, it would be expected that a higher percentage of them would report that they did not like school, and this was the case. However, despite the above-average intelligence of chronic alcoholics, a disproportionately large number of them said they did not like school. Without attempting to assess responsibility, this finding suggests that a substantial number of

chronic alcoholics on Skid Row are men of average or above intelligence whom the school did not reach. Although they appear to have been entirely capable of completing high school, most of these men dropped out during grammar-school or early high-school years.

Mental Health of Homeless Men. — Scattered through the interview were several questions which, considered together, provided sufficient information for the coders to classify each man into one of the following very broad categories.[2]

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| Total | 100 |
| Normal mental health | 38 |
| Aberrant (has some "odd" personality traits but not sufficiently disorganized to be classed as neurotic) | 36 |
| Neurotic | 16 |
| Psychotic | 4 |
| Unable to classify | 5 |

One homeless man in five was rated as definitely neurotic or psychotic, while an additional 36 percent were rated as aberrant, or with some "odd" or "queer" personality traits not sufficiently disorganizing to be classed as neurotic or psychotic tendencies. There was too little information to classify about 5 percent of the men. Thus, only a few more than one-third of the men on Skid Row were rated by the coders as having average or normal mental health, a little more than one-third show aberrant traits, and 20 percent are definitely in need of mental-health care.

Tables 17-4-B, C represent responses of the men to specific questions. They are presented to help substantiate the ratings of the coders. When asked, "How are your nerves? Are you inclined to be nervous or on edge? How often do you feel this way?" roughly one-half of the men reported that they were "almost never" nervous, whereas 22 percent reported they felt nervous "frequently" or "most of the time." This is significant because "feeling nervous" is a phrase which neurotic persons commonly use to describe their symptoms. The men were also asked much later in the interview, "Have you ever seen a doctor or psychiatrist or been in the hospital because of a nervous condition?" One man in 6 (16 percent) reported he had been given medical attention because of a nervous condition. About one-half of this group had been examined by a psychiatrist, either in an office or while in the hospital.

If Tables 17-A, B, C are examined to determine the relationship of mental health to marital status and chronic alcoholism, it is found that widowed men usually have much better mental health than men who are separated and divorced or unmarried. The mental health of single,

Table 17-4. MENTAL HEALTH OF HOMELESS MEN

| Mental health status | All homeless men | Marital status | | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Widowed | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelict |
| A. RATING BY CODERS, total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Normal | 38 | 38 | 36 | 62 | 54 | 40 | 17 |
| Aberrant | 36 | 39 | 38 | 22 | 30 | 36 | 44 |
| Neurotic | 16 | 14 | 20 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 27 |
| Psychotic | 4 | 6 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 4 | 5 |
| Unable to classify | 5 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 6 |
| B. "HOW OFTEN DO YOU FEEL NERVOUS OR ON EDGE?" total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Almost never nervous | 50 | 50 | 45 | 61 | 62 | 54 | 31 |
| Occasionally | 27 | 30 | 28 | 14 | 24 | 28 | 31 |
| Frequently | 10 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 7 | 8 | 16 |
| Most of the time | 12 | 9 | 16 | 15 | 8 | 10 | 21 |
| No information | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 1 |
| C. TREATMENT FOR NERVOUS DISORDERS, total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| No treatment | 82 | 86 | 78 | 92 | 91 | 83 | 70 |
| Saw medical doctor* | 2 | 2 | 2 | 3 | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| Saw psychiatrist | 3 | 3 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 4 | 5 |
| Was in hospital | 6 | 6 | 9 | ... | 4 | 3 | 11 |
| Saw psychiatrist and was in hospital | 5 | 4 | 7 | ... | 2 | 2 | 10 |
| No information | 2 | ... | ... | 2 | ... | 6 | 1 |
| D. CODERS' RATING OF DEGREE OF PERSONALITY INTEGRATION AND EXTENT OF INTERNAL CONFLICT, total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Well-organized, little internal conflict | 29 | 30 | 24 | 53 | 42 | 31 | 9 |
| Somewhat disorganized | 49 | 53 | 51 | 31 | 46 | 46 | 56 |
| Badly disorganized, much tension, conflict | 16 | 13 | 21 | 11 | 8 | 13 | 31 |
| Unable to classify | 6 | 4 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 4 |
| E. CODERS' RATING OF EMOTIONAL STABILITY, total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Emotionally stable, normal control | 56 | 60 | 52 | 72 | 72 | 56 | 36 |
| Emotionally unstable, violent temper | 7 | 7 | 6 | 10 | 5 | 6 | 10 |
| Emotionally unstable, other than anger reactions | 32 | 32 | 38 | 16 | 21 | 27 | 51 |
| Unable to classify | 4 | 2 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 10 | 3 |

*Excludes men in hospital

separated and divorced men was roughly equal. Holding marital status constant, it is evident that all but a small fraction of chronic alcoholics suffer from poor mental health. The proportion of psychotics or neurotics among the chronic alcoholics was more than twice that of the teetotalers or light drinkers, and in addition, a much higher percentage

of chronic alcoholics were classified as having "aberrant" personalities. This could have been a rationalization of the situation by the coders, despite the fact that they were warned against it. Coder bias, however, could not account for the fact that about two-thirds of the alcoholics admitted being "nervous" at times, that two-thirds of the teetotalers and light drinkers did not claim such feelings, or that 30 percent of the chronic alcoholics, but only 9 percent of the nonalcoholics have received treatment for mental or nervous disorders.

Interviewers' Rating of Intelligence.— The interviewers tended to be of each interview, the interviewer was asked to rate the respondent's personality adjustment. The term "personality adjustment" was defined by degree of interpersonal conflict in social situations. The results of the interviewers' reports are as follows:

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| Man was always poorly adjusted | 32 |
| Man has always been well-adjusted, still is | 24 |
| Man was never well-adjusted, but formerly was better adjusted than now | 24 |
| Man was once well-adjusted but not now | 15 |
| Man was maladjusted in past but is adjusted now | 1 |

Thus, the interviewers believed that three-fourths of the homeless men were suffering from personal maladjustment. In comparison with the ever-married men, an extraordinarily high percentage of bachelors were classified as "always poorly adjusted," while a disproportionately large number of separated and divorced men were classified as "once well-adjusted but not now." The interviewers rated only 6 percent of the chronic alcoholics as still well-adjusted and more than 70 percent of them as never well-adjusted. Thus, the chronic alcoholic appears to have been a maladjusted boy whose mental health deteriorated over the years until he became mentally and emotionally sick.

Integration of Personality and Internal Conflict (Table 17-4-D).— The coders were asked to estimate the degree to which the men were disorganized because of internal conflicts operating at the time they were interviewed. According to their estimates, only 29 percent of the men evidenced no internal conflict. One-half were rated as somewhat disorganized, while 16 percent were rated as badly disorganized because of internal conflict. Men who were separated or divorced were rated as more disorganized than single men, while widowed men were rated as experiencing less conflict than either single or separated and divorced men.

Only 9 percent of the chronic alcoholics were rated as showing no

internal conflict, and 31 percent were thought to be badly disorganized. The reverse situation was observed for teetotalers and light drinkers: only 8 percent of this group were rated as having severe conflict, while 42 percent appeared to be without internal conflict.

Hence, the analysis of the responses of the men themselves, the interviewers' ratings of personality adjustment, and the coders' ratings of psychotic or neurotic traits and degree of internal conflict all indicate that a high percentage of Skid Row men are in poor mental health and are poorly adjusted in their relationships to other people. The chronic alcoholics are in a much worse condition than the teetotalers and light drinkers — a disproportionately large share exhibit symptoms of psychosis, neurosis, or personal maladjustment.

Emotional Stability (Table 17-4-E). — The coders were asked to indicate the degree of emotional control exercised by each man. More than one-half (56 percent) of the men were classed as emotionally stable, and almost 40 percent were classified as unstable. Of the unstable group, almost one-fifth were identified as having violent tempers, while the others were regarded as unstable with respect to other emotional reactions. Men who were separated and divorced were rated as less emotionally stable than were men who were single, while widowed men were rated as much more emotionally stable than either single or separated and divorced men. Holding marital status constant, men who were chronic alcoholics were much less stable than teetotalers or light drinkers. A disproportionately large number of chronic alcoholics were among those with violent tempers or unstable with respect to other emotional factors.

## PERSONALITY CHARACTERISTICS

In addition to the over-all evaluations of intelligence and mental health the coders were asked to classify each homeless man according to a series of basic personality characteristics. In the analysis which follows, the relationship of these characteristics to marital status or chronic alcoholism, with marital status held constant, is assessed.

Conformity (Table 17-5-A). — Each man was rated by the degree to which he appeared to conform or nonconform to social norms. Many people have regarded Skid Row men as being "social rebels" who delight in defying social rules of accepted or customary behavior. Only 3 percent of all homeless men could be classified as definite nonconformists by the coders, while there was evidence that 47 percent were conformists. An additional 43 percent were categorized as not strongly influ-

Table 17-5. BASIC PERSONALITY TRAITS OF HOMELESS MEN

| Trait | All homeless men | Marital status | | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Widowed | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| A. CONFORMIST-NONCONFORMIST, total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Conformist | 47 | 45 | 47 | 62 | 60 | 46 | 29 |
| Not strongly influenced by custom but not a rebel | 43 | 48 | 42 | 30 | 32 | 42 | 58 |
| Nonconformist | 3 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 1 | 6 |
| Unable to classify | 8 | 4 | 9 | 3 | 6 | 11 | 7 |
| B. HEDONISM-ASCETICISM, total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Hedonistic | 29 | 27 | 38 | 7 | 9 | 20 | 63 |
| Normal | 59 | 60 | 54 | 84 | 78 | 64 | 30 |
| Ascetic | 3 | 5 | 1 | 3 | 5 | 1 | 1 |
| Unable to classify | 9 | 8 | 7 | 7 | 8 | 15 | 7 |
| C. PERSONALITY DEPENDENCY RATING, total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Self-reliant | 36 | 36 | 33 | 55 | 46 | 35 | 23 |
| Somewhat dependent | 39 | 38 | 44 | 31 | 38 | 38 | 42 |
| Very dependent | 19 | 21 | 20 | 9 | 13 | 17 | 30 |
| Unable to classify | 6 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 4 | 10 | 4 |
| D. AMBITION RATING, total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Very ambitious, energetic, hard-working | 7 | 6 | 6 | 12 | 12 | 6 | 1 |
| Average level of ambition, striving | 50 | 49 | 50 | 59 | 54 | 52 | 42 |
| Low level of incentive, little drive | 36 | 38 | 39 | 27 | 28 | 33 | 49 |
| Very low level of ambition, lazy, "bum" | 3 | 4 | 1 | ... | 2 | 1 | 4 |
| Unable to classify | 5 | 4 | 4 | 2 | 4 | 9 | 4 |
| E. SOCIABILITY RATING, total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Sociable | 56 | 51 | 61 | 67 | 57 | 58 | 54 |
| Asocial | 33 | 40 | 29 | 25 | 34 | 27 | 36 |
| Anti-social | 4 | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 3 | 4 |
| Unable to classify | 7 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 12 | 5 |

enced by custom, but not rebellious. More widowed men were classified as conformists than single or separated and divorced men. Teetotalers or light drinkers were found to be conformists more often than were chronic alcoholics. However, only a very small percentage of the chronic alcoholics (6 percent) could be classed as definite rebels or nonconformists; the bulk of this group were not strongly influenced by custom. Thus, although there is a low level of compliance with social norms, it appears to be based on lack of knowledge or concern, or both, but not on conscious rebellion.

Hedonism-Asceticism (Table 17-5-B). — It has been said that one of

the reasons men are on Skid Row is that they are hedonistic — their primary motive is to satisfy today's need for pleasure rather than to defer present joys in the expectation of later rewards. When asked to classify the men on a scale containing the three categories of "hedonistic," "normal," or "ascetic" (given to self-denial), the coders graded almost 60 percent of the men as normal, but of the remainder, almost all were rated as hedonistic. Thus, there appear to be few ascetics living on Skid Row who deny themselves a more comfortable residence in order to save money, etc. Occasionally one hears of a miser who lives in this area and hoards pennies while growing rich in the stock-market, real estate, or other business operations, but these cases are definitely exceptional. Seeking immediate pleasure seems to be a definite personality characteristic of almost one-third of the men on Skid Row. The bachelors were rated as more ascetic than the ever-married men. Few of the widowed men were classified as hedonistic, whereas an above-average proportion of the separated and divorced men were given this rating.

Hedonism seems to be an outstanding trait of chronic alcoholics, for almost two-thirds of the men were given this rating by the coders. Coders were warned that drinking itself was not to be regarded as a symptom of hedonism. Almost no teetotalers and light drinkers were classed as hedonistic.

Dependency-Self-Reliance (Table 17-5-C). — Homeless men have often been said to have "dependent" personalities. By this it is meant that they need to rely on someone who is more forthright and decisive than they to guide them and to make decisions for them. The coders were asked to review the relationship between each respondent and his parents, his spouse, and other persons with whom he had formed close associations, to determine the extent to which he was dependent. Fifty-nine percent of the men were rated as dependent to some degree, and 19 percent as "very dependent." Widowed men were classed as "self-reliant" in more than one-half of the cases, whereas both the single and the separated and divorced men showed a high level of dependency. The alcoholic men were rated as considerably more dependent than the teetotalers or light drinkers. In fact, 30 percent of chronic alcoholics were rated as "very dependent." Although this relationship was present among both single and separated and divorced men, the correlation between alcoholism and dependency appeared to be much higher among the bachelors than among the men with broken marriages.

Ambition (Table 17-5-D). — From the work history of the men, their comments about the jobs liked and disliked, and their reasons for leaving one job and accepting another, the coders pieced together an ambition rating. This classification should be of interest to those who plan to do rehabilitation work among these men:

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| Very ambitious, energetic, hard-working | 7 |
| Average level of ambition, striving to get ahead | 50 |
| Low level of ambition, little drive | 36 |
| Very low level of ambition, lazy, "bum" | 3 |
| Unable to classify | 6 |

Thus on the one hand, Skid Row has very few human dynamos, and on the other comparatively few parasites. About one-half of the men seem to have an average level of ambition, but more than one-third tend to "take it easy." Widowed men received a much higher ambition rating than single or separated and divorced men.

When cross-classified by drinking behavior, the findings show a very high correlation between low ambition and chronic alcoholism. Almost no chronic alcoholics were classed as very ambitious and more than one-half were rated as having low incentive. Teetotalers and light drinkers showed the reverse pattern: a much higher percentage of men in "low drive." It should be noted, however, that 42 percent of all chronic alcoholics were rated as having an average level of ambition, and that 30 percent of the teetotalers or light drinkers were rated either "low ambition" or "lazy." Thus, it is not an all-or-none relationship. Also, there is no answer here to the cause-and-effect problem concerning low ambition and heavy drinking. It can be claimed only that men who are chronic alcoholics on Skid Row have never shown great ambition and only a small group showed even normal ambition. These ratings are extremely subjective, to be sure, since the average ambition level of the general population has not been measured. The coders were assuming that every man wanted to improve his socio-economic status, but to enjoy his life while doing it.

Sociability (Table 17-5-D). — It has also been claimed that Skid Row is a collecting-place for people who hate other human beings and who are basically anti-social. By retreating to Skid Row a man can pull into his shell and have a minimum of social interaction. To test this idea the coders were asked to review the description each man gave of his life before coming to Skid Row, his typical day on Skid Row, the number and types of friends he had, and what he did for recreation. On the basis of this information, they classified him as being either "sociable," "asocial," or "anti-social." This classification was of the man's attitude toward people generally, not only toward Skid Row men, since it has already been shown that a high percentage of them dislike others on Skid Row. More than one-half of the men (56 percent) were rated as "sociable," while 33 percent were rated as "asocial," and only 4 percent were rated as definitely "anti-social." Thus, although there seems to be very

little avoidance of human contact on the part of Skid Row men, a substantial share of them can "take it or leave it alone" when it comes to having friends or communicating with others. Bachelors were definitely more asocial and anti-social than were the men who had been married. The correlation between sociability and drinking, holding marital status constant, was almost zero. Thus the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts are no more and no less sociable, according to these data, than are teetotalers and light drinkers.

## SUMMARY

This chapter has presented strong evidence that individual personality characteristics are highly correlated with the presence of homeless men on Skid Row. The alcoholics tend to be men who in their youth were inclined to be a little lazy with no definite occupational goals. They had comparatively below-average levels of aspiration or ambition to "get ahead." They were filled with wanderlust, and were inclined to run around with a tough crowd — they traveled in gangs, spent time in taverns and poolhalls, boycotted school, looked for a good time and had little concern for the future.

Skid Row alcoholics showed much evidence of poor mental health; a high percentage indicate deviant personality traits and in roughly one-third of the cases these are serious enough to be classed as neurotic or psychotic.

Alcoholics were shown not to be deficient in intelligence, and they are probably considerably above-average in intelligence in comparison with the social and economic strata from which they are drawn. With reference to specific personality traits, chronic alcoholics were shown to be less conforming, more hedonistic, more sociable, more dependent, less ambitious, more assimilated into Skid Row life (which they nevertheless dislike), and more inclined to feel self-hate than teetotalers and light drinkers.

These personality characteristics, combined with irregular employment or prolonged unemployment, low level of living, an unhappy family background or a family where the father drank or was himself disorganized, or marital discord, probably constitute the best possible "explanation" of Skid Row alcoholism that can be made at the present time. The next chapter will undertake to integrate all of these clues into a more systematic theory.

Personality structure also seems to be an important reason why many teetotalers and light drinkers are on Skid Row. In their youth an extraordinary share were withdrawn, not overly intelligent, with a moderately low level of ambition. This group of men did not exhibit such an

intense degree of maladjustment and neurotic tendencies found for the alcoholics. Apparently, economic and related forces, playing a relatively large role interact with personality factors to create this fate for the homeless men.

## FOOTNOTES

[1]The author acknowledges with pleasure the very helpful advice and assistance of Dr. Arthur Hartman, Director of Psychology and Research of the Psychiatric Department of the Municipal Court of Chicago. As a clinical psychologist who has perforce made rapid one-sitting diagnostic evaluations of a wide variety of persons brought before the courts (including many homeless men), and also as a psychologist well informed concerning the use of projective techniques in personality assessment, Dr. Hartman gave much encouragement and many helpful suggestions. He is not, however, to be held responsible for the details of the procedure that was actually followed.

[2]In addition to those of Tables 17-4-B, C, items used to determine this mental-health rating were:

1. Hypochondria — reporting three or more current physical ailments that had not been disabling and for which no medical care had been sought.
2. Tattoos — in connection with other symptoms, are thought by psychologists to symbolize personal disorders.
3. Military punishment — types of offenses while in military service.
4. Interviewers' ratings on mood, talkativeness, aggressive behavior, anxiety, delusions, and hallucinations.
5. Interviewers' ratings of the degree of personal maladjustment of the men.
6. Questions — these were scattered at several different points in the interview to reduce threat to the respondent:
   a. Do you ever see strange things like visions, fairies, ghosts, or things like that?
   b. Do you have any extraordinary powers or abilities not possessed by other persons?
   c. Do you ever hear people talking to you or about you when there is no one around?
   d. If you were asked to describe yourself, what kind of a person would you say you are?
   e. Do you think there are some people who want to hurt you? What kind of people are they?
   f. Are there any special kinds of people you hate?
   g. If you had your life to live over again, what kinds of things would you do differently?
   h. If you could make three wishes and they would all be granted, what would you ask for?

*Chapter 18*

# *THE SKID ROW MAN'S IMAGE OF HIMSELF AND HIS ASPIRATIONS*

Clinical psychologists believe that successful rehabilitation of human beings depends as much upon their subjective view of themselves and their problem as upon their objective condition. Hence, this study undertook to find out how each Skid Row man viewed himself and how he saw the future. This was accomplished by a series of unstructured questions and projective questions, scattered at various parts of the interview to minimize inter-question influence.

At one point in the interview the man was asked about his self-imagery directly by the question, "If you were asked to describe yourself, what kind of a person would you say you are?" The responses are summarized in Table 18-1, by drinking-disability-age classification. It must be kept in mind that these are saliency responses — the things that came first in the minds of the men when presented with this question.

The most striking result of this inquiry is that a very large proportion of the men apparently did not regard themselves as being abnormal, different, or disorganized. The five most common responses volunteered were of the following types:

1. "A normal, average person"
2. "A good, moral, right-acting person"
3. "A likable, friendly, easy-to-get-along-with person"
4. "A person who minds his own business, does not bother others"
5. "A working man earning his own way"

Teetotalers and light drinkers were much more inclined to give these types of responses than were the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts. The young were a little less disposed to regard themselves as normal than were the middle-aged and elderly. Proportionately fewer of the elderly men, especially the teetotalers, described themselves as being likable or friendly; they said instead that they minded their own business. The handicapped were consistently anxious to emphasize that they were essentially good or right-acting, and were on Skid Row through no moral fault.

Only a small minority of the men viewed themselves as being evil or

**Table 18-1. IF YOU WERE ASKED TO DESCRIBE YOURSELF, WHAT KIND OF A PERSON WOULD YOU SAY YOU ARE?**

| Kind of person | All Skid Row men | Teetotalers and light drinkers | | | | Moderate drinkers | | | Heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | Elderly | Young-handicapped | Young-not handicapped | Total | Young-handicapped | Young-not handicapped | Total | Elderly | Handicapped | | Not Handicapped | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | Young | Middle aged | Young | Middle aged |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| A "normal", "average" person | 34 | 33 | 32 | 36 | 32 | 35 | 28 | 38 | 27 | 25 | 18 | 32 | 28 | 28 |
| A "good," "normal," "right acting" person | 28 | 37 | 35 | 39 | 36 | 28 | 37 | 24 | 19 | 28 | 21 | 20 | 17 | 11 |
| A "sinner," "bad," "evil," "immoral" person | 3 | 1 | ... | 1 | 1 | 3 | ... | 5 | 7 | ... | 15 | 7 | 11 | 2 |
| A morally weak person, unable to pursue course he wants to go | 6 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | 2 | ... | 4 | 13 | 6 | 18 | 9 | 12 | 18 |
| A likable, friendly, easy-to-get-along-with person | 34 | 35 | 19 | 39 | 42 | 36 | 35 | 37 | 32 | 22 | 26 | 27 | 38 | 38 |
| A bad, tough, rough, hard-to-get-along-with person | 1 | 1 | ... | 1 | 1 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 2 | ... | 15 | ... | 2 | ... |
| An alcoholic person, unable to control his drinking | 8 | ... | ... | ... | ... | 3 | 3 | 4 | 20 | 3 | 10 | 33 | 20 | 23 |
| A person with inferior abilities, intelligence, capabilities; uneducated | 3 | 3 | 3 | 6 | 1 | 2 | 3 | 1 | 5 | 3 | 19 | 5 | 1 | 4 |
| A victim of poor luck, fate, unfortunate circumstances | 5 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 5 | 4 | 8 | 3 | 5 | ... | 8 | 5 | 7 | 5 |
| A workingman earning his own way | 15 | 19 | 9 | 15 | 4 | 19 | 17 | 17 | 10 | 3 | 4 | 6 | 15 | 15 |
| An almost helpless dependent, unable to take care of his needs | 5 | 5 | 7 | 8 | 27 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 6 | 9 | ... | 14 | ... | 4 |
| A victim of other people's wrong doings abused | 2 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 2 | 3 | 4 | 2 | ... | 5 |
| Just a person who minds his own business; does not bother others | 17 | 23 | 30 | 19 | 22 | 15 | 15 | 14 | 11 | 16 | 15 | 6 | 15 | 4 |
| A person with superior abilities, unusual intelligence | 1 | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | ... | 1 | 1 | 3 | 4 | 1 | ... | ... |
| A person with minor personality problems, socially maladjusted | 1 | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | 1 | 3 | 1 | 2 | ... | 11 | ... | ... | 4 |
| Other--vague, general | 3 | 2 | 3 | 6 | ... | 3 | ... | 7 | 3 | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| No response, can't say | 7 | 6 | 11 | 3 | 4 | 10 | 10 | 10 | 7 | 15 | 11 | 2 | 3 | 10 |

sinful. When a man did admit that he was different, it was more often in terms of being morally weak or not too smart, rather than regarding himself as evil. When they did admit a fault, it was mostly to confess their inability to control their drinking. If willingness to admit that he has lost control of his drinking is the first step toward the rehabilitation of alcoholics, then at least one-fifth of the alcoholics on Skid Row have reached this state. The middle-aged alcoholics were especially free in admitting their drinking problem.

The young alcoholics were a little more inclined than were older alcoholics to identify themselves as being bad, sinful, evil, immoral, tough, rough, hard to get along with, and a person afflicted with personality problems. This self-disparagement probably reflects the facts; many of the younger and middle-aged chronic alcoholics do have these traits. But only about one alcoholic in four indulged in this self-disparagement. An exception was the small group of young, handicapped alcoholics — these men held themselves in unusually low esteem.

It is perhaps surprising that only a few of Skid Row men excuse themselves by claiming foul play from society. The percentage of men who claimed they were victims of bad luck, of wrongdoing at the hands of others, etc., is very small.

## THE THREE WISHES

At another spot in the interview each man was asked, "If you could make three wishes and they would all be granted, what would you wish for?" Seven percent of the men refused to play this projective game; the elderly men especially did not make wishes, probably because the chances of their wishes being fulfilled seemed to them to be ridiculously remote.

By far the first wish reaction was to ask for a job or a better job. This was especially foremost in the minds of the younger men. Health was the second most frequent wish, especially among the elderly and the handicapped. Money to be able to escape their present existence was the third most frequent wish. If one combined all of the economic appeals such as wishing for a better place to live, for food and clothing, and for money, the strength of this wish for a higher plane of living is equal to that for better employment.

Another group of wishes, expressed by a very substantial fraction of the men deals with family. One man in 6 wished for marriage, a happy home, and 14 percent asked to be reunited with wife, children, or other relatives. Younger men, rather than the older men, were especially inclined to make family wishes, and these types of wishes were more common among alcoholics than among teetotalers and light drinkers.

About one-sixth of the alcoholics spontaneously wished to be able to

Table 18-2. IF YOU COULD MAKE THREE WISHES AND THEY WOULD ALL BE GRANTED, WHAT WOULD YOU WISH FOR?

| Things wished for | All Skid Row men | Teetotalers and light drinkers | | | | Moderate drinkers | | | Heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | Elderly | Young-handicapped | Young-not handicapped | Total | Young-handicapped | Young-not handicapped | Total | Elderly | Handicapped | | Not handicapped | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | Young | Middle aged | Young | Middle aged |
| To be able to control my drinking | 8 | 1 | 1 | ... | 2 | 7 | 4 | 8 | 17 | 3 | 18 | 17 | 19 | 24 |
| For marriage, a happy home | 17 | 16 | 6 | 16 | 21 | 20 | 15 | 23 | 18 | 6 | 15 | 18 | 26 | 17 |
| For a job, a better job | 34 | 29 | 13 | 35 | 36 | 38 | 39 | 38 | 37 | 16 | 40 | 41 | 48 | 31 |
| For health, better health | 25 | 33 | 35 | 45 | 23 | 21 | 31 | 16 | 18 | 22 | 19 | 31 | 8 | 14 |
| Contact with neighbors, friends, a conventional community life | 7 | 7 | 4 | 12 | 5 | 6 | 8 | 5 | 8 | 1 | 19 | 5 | 12 | 5 |
| "Happiness," "contentment," "peace of mind" | 8 | 9 | 7 | 6 | 12 | 3 | ... | 5 | 9 | 9 | 12 | ... | 12 | 14 |
| A chance to realize an occupational ambition | 7 | 9 | 3 | 12 | 10 | 8 | 12 | 4 | 4 | 9 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 6 |
| Money, material wealth | 26 | 28 | 28 | 27 | 28 | 28 | 31 | 27 | 23 | 25 | 15 | 20 | 22 | 7 |
| Immediate needs--clothes, food | 6 | 6 | 10 | 7 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 6 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 2 | 7 | 8 |
| An unlimited supply of liquor | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 3 | ... | 2 | ... | 4 | 2 | 3 | ... |
| A better place to live (no mention of family or community) | 17 | 21 | 27 | 15 | 21 | 18 | 15 | 20 | 13 | 3 | 12 | 16 | 12 | 13 |
| Better education, more training, special training | 3 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 3 | ... | 4 | 3 | ... | 4 | 5 | 4 | ... |
| To be more religious, have better morals. | 7 | 7 | 4 | 11 | 7 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 5 | 11 | 7 | 11 |
| To be reunited with wife, children, other relatives; go home | 14 | 10 | 4 | 8 | 15 | 19 | 17 | 19 | 17 | 3 | 22 | 22 | 11 | 27 |
| To be free of responsibilities: wife, family, debts | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 3 | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | 7 | ... |
| Man makes a self destructive wish: "wish I were dead," etc | 1 | ... | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | 5 | ... | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | 2 | 2 |
| Man makes a wish that would undo past wrongs he believes he has done | 2 | 1 | ... | 2 | 2 | 1 | 2 | 1 | 3 | ... | 8 | 3 | 4 | 2 |
| Wishes he could relive certain parts of his life that were happy | 2 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 3 | 2 | ... | 7 | 1 | 1 | 2 |
| Wishes persons now dead or absent could be brought back | 6 | 4 | 1 | 5 | 5 | 8 | 11 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 12 | 7 | 6 | 6 |
| Man makes a frivolous wish, or wish not relevant to present situation | 11 | 12 | 8 | 12 | 14 | 9 | 3 | 12 | 10 | 3 | 12 | 13 | 11 | 3 |
| Man refuses to make a wish, cannot make a wish | 7 | 7 | 14 | 3 | 6 | 5 | 5 | 5 | 7 | 18 | 19 | 1 | 9 | 5 |

control their drinking. Almost all of them were young or middle-aged. Those who were alcoholic but not handicapped were more inclined to make this wish than were those who drank and were handicapped. Thus, not only do a very substantial share of men admit they have a drinking problem, but they also want to do something about it (Table 18-2).

Small but significant proportions of the men made social wishes — desire to have contacts with better neighbors, friends, or to engage in conventional community life; to be more religious or to have better morals, or to undo wrongs they believed they had done. About one-tenth of the men made ambition wishes—for more education or a chance to realize an occupational goal.

Only 1 man in 8 made a frivolous wish or a wish not relevant to his present situation. Usually this was his third wish, after he had expressed two sincere wishes of the type described above.

Only 2 percent of the chronic alcoholics wished for that ideal state where they could have all they could drink — whenever they wanted it. Thus, only a small fraction of the men projected themselves into the role the public popularly ascribes to them.

Summary. — The wishes made by these men were overwhelmingly pro-rehabilitation. With only minor exceptions they reflect a desire to rise above Skid Row, to do something about their problem, and to become normal again.

## IF YOU HAD YOUR LIFE TO LIVE OVER . . . .

"If you had your life to live over, what would you do differently?" was an inquiry made toward the very end of the interview, as a sign-off question. About 80 percent of the men clearly indicated they would live their life differently, while 15 percent said they would probably do about the same thing. These were primarily elderly men, and many meant that the same sequence of economic hardships would probably repeat itself despite all of their efforts.

The things that the men would do differently, if given another chance, are ranked in order of mention:

a. Get more education. — Skid Row men blame much of their economic plight upon lack of education and having dropped out of school. Young men mention this much more frequently than elderly men.

b. Control Drinking. — Almost one-half of the chronic alcoholics (44 percent) voluntarily mentioned this.

c. Learn a better trade, get a steady job. — In their youth, the homeless men have been shown to have been rather unconcerned about a work career and learning a trade or getting a good job. In retrospect, one-fifth of them list this as one of the things they

Table 18-3. IF YOU HAD YOUR LIFE TO LIVE OVER, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY? AND DO YOU EVER FEEL THAT IT IS HOPELESS TO TRY TO GET AHEAD?

| Response | All Skid Row men | Teetotalers and light drinkers | | | | Moderate drinkers | | | Heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Total | Elderly | Young handicapped | Young not handicapped | Total | Young-handicapped | Young-not handicapped | Total | Elderly | Handicapped | | Not handicapped | |
| | | | | | | | | | | | Young | Middle aged | Young | Middle aged |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Would probably not do anything differently | 15 | 18 | 27 | 11 | 18 | 14 | 21 | 10 | 10 | 22 | 11 | 7 | 5 | 13 |
| Would control my drinking | 25 | 8 | 3 | 18 | 6 | 24 | 24 | 24 | 44 | 19 | 51 | 52 | 44 | 51 |
| Would marry; would try harder to make my marriage a success | 18 | 14 | 14 | 13 | 14 | 18 | 15 | 19 | 22 | 6 | 12 | 32 | 36 | 16 |
| Would settle down and have a family; would be better to my kids | 8 | 6 | 4 | 10 | 4 | 7 | ... | 11 | 11 | 3 | 10 | 18 | 10 | 8 |
| Would try to get more education | 26 | 25 | 18 | 24 | 30 | 33 | 40 | 29 | 25 | 9 | 32 | 21 | 35 | 23 |
| Would try to learn a better trade, get a steady job | 20 | 21 | 10 | 27 | 23 | 21 | 20 | 21 | 19 | 16 | 12 | 17 | 24 | 19 |
| Would be less mobile, would stay in one place | 5 | 6 | 6 | 8 | 4 | 6 | ... | 9 | 5 | 3 | 3 | 9 | 6 | 2 |
| Would keep better company, associate with different people | 5 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 1 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 5 | 3 | 8 | 5 | 9 | ... |
| Would save my money, get social security, prepare for future | 12 | 14 | 10 | 13 | 18 | 12 | 3 | 17 | 10 | 13 | 4 | 16 | 11 | 6 |
| Would work harder, would be more steady at work, not change jobs so much | 8 | 7 | 4 | 10 | 6 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 12 | 3 | 17 | 10 | 19 | 7 |
| Would treat my family (father, mother, sisters, brothers) better | 2 | 1 | ... | ... | 2 | 1 | 3 | 1 | 3 | ... | 8 | ... | 4 | 3 |
| Would take a different job, would not have chosen the line of work I did | 12 | 14 | 15 | 18 | 10 | 10 | 13 | 9 | 12 | 19 | 8 | 12 | 9 | 14 |
| Would never have married, would not have married when or with whom I did | 5 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 6 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 5 | ... | 8 | 8 | 6 | 4 |
| Would be more religious, attend church more, have better morals | 7 | 6 | 3 | 12 | 4 | 6 | 2 | 7 | 10 | 9 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 14 |
| Would do everything differently--vague implied changed | 3 | 4 | 4 | 4 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 4 | 2 | ... | ... | 5 | 3 | ... |
| Other | 7 | 6 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 9 | 9 | 8 | 7 | ... | 4 | ... | 10 | 16 |
| No answer, no information | 7 | 5 | 12 | 1 | 3 | 10 | 10 | 9 | 7 | 21 | ... | 2 | 9 | 5 |

would do differently.

d. Marry or try harder to make marriage a success. — About one-fourth of the men made this wish. It was more frequent among the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts than among the tee-totalers and light drinkers.

e. Save money, get Social Security, prepare for the future. — Many of the men admit freely that they squandered much of their earnings in their youth, and are where they are because they did not save or invest in a home.

f. Work harder, be more steady at work, be less mobile. — Many men regret having been rather unambitious in their youth. Only 5 percent mention having been too mobile; this is an indirect way of showing that as a group they have been comparatively immobile.

g. Be more religious, attend church more, have better morals. — Seven percent of the men felt sufficently strongly about their religious status to say that if they had another chance they would be more religious.

Summary. — All of the major wishes are pro-rehabilitation and reflect the values of the larger society.

## FEELINGS OF HOPELESSNESS

Considerable importance should be attached to the data resulting from the question, "Do you ever feel that it is hopeless to try to get ahead? How often do you feel that way? (If Yes: 'Why do you feel that way?')" If Skid Row men are found to be completely without hope, the task of rehabilitation will be doubly difficult; the man who has hope can be stimulated to extricate himself from Skid Row, while the man without hope will refuse even to try (Table 18-4).

Luckily, Skid Row men show a substantial amount of hope. Their responses as a group formed the following distribution:

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| Total | 100 |
| Almost never feels hopeless | 68 |
| Sometimes, or often, feels hopeless | 17 |
| Feels hopeless most of the time | 10 |
| No response | 5 |

Only one-tenth of the men could be said to have rather completely given way to despair and no longer hope to get ahead. Two-thirds claimed they almost never had such feelings. Considering their sur-

Table 18-4. LENGTH OF TIME HOMELESS MEN EXPECT TO STAY ON SKID ROW AND INTENSITY OF DESIRE TO LEAVE

| Length of time homeless men expect to stay on Skid Row | Skid Row total | Acceptance of Skid Row living | | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Accepts | Rejects | Tee-total | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Does not plan or desire to leave | 25 | 54 | 16 | 27 | 33 | 32 | 13 | 11 |
| Wants to leave permanently, but doubts if can or will | 4 | 1 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 3 | 4 | 6 |
| Hopes to leave permanently in future, no definite plans | 22 | 16 | 24 | 21 | 27 | 20 | 18 | 22 |
| Hopes to get away temporarily within 6 months | 14 | 15 | 14 | 8 | 9 | 15 | 17 | 26 |
| Hopes to get away permanently within 6 months, but no definite prospects yet | 24 | 12 | 28 | 22 | 17 | 22 | 35 | 32 |
| Has definite plan or prospects for getting away permanently within 6 months | 7 | 2 | 9 | 15 | 6 | 5 | 9 | 3 |
| No information | 3 | ... | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | ... |
| INTENSITY OF DESIRE TO LEAVE SKID ROW | | | | | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Does not desire to leave permanently | 30 | 64 | 20 | 32 | 36 | 41 | 15 | 20 |
| Desires to get away permanently: | | | | | | | | |
| Low or moderate intensity | 50 | 31 | 56 | 37 | 47 | 42 | 64 | 67 |
| Intense desire | 17 | 6 | 21 | 28 | 14 | 15 | 17 | 13 |
| No information | 3 | ... | 3 | 4 | 2 | 2 | 4 | ... |

roundings, the treatment they receive, and the hardships they experience, this is an amazing demonstration of optimism.

The permanent feeling of hopelessness is most frequent among heavy drinkers, the elderly, and the handicapped. It reaches a comparatively high level among the elderly heavy drinkers and the middle-aged handicapped heavy drinkers, but even among these groups, less than one-fourth admit they feel hopeless almost all of the time.

Periodic feelings of hopelessness are experienced most frequently by the elderly, the handicapped, and the heavy drinkers, except that heavy drinkers are afflicted with above-average severity. More than one-fourth of the young, nonhandicapped, heavy drinkers admitted that they sometimes or often feel hopeless. Presumably this takes the form of despondency following an episode of drunkenness.

Yet the most important finding is that more than one-half of even the truly down-and-out men on Skid Row, and more than two-thirds of all Skid Row men almost never feel that their situation is hopeless. The dream of getting ahead is far from dead on Skid Row.

Among those who do feel hopeless, either permanently or periodically, the hopelessness centered around three factors, ranked in order of their mention:

1. Advanced age or poor health
2. Inability to get a job or a good job
3. Inability to control drinking

As a middle-aged or elderly man comes to realize that time is running out on him, the prospects of getting away seem to grow dim and the feeling of hopelessness rises. As the unskilled worker tries repeatedly to find work, but succeeds only in maintaining himself with occasional spot jobs, the feeling of hopelessness takes over. As the chronic alcoholic watches his health deteriorate and still is incapable of stopping his drinking, he comes to believe that a comeback is impossible. The handicapped Skid Row man, without skills and without prospect for rehabilitation, also ceases to hope. But these feelings come only periodically and take over only at the very end when terminal illness strikes or other complete catastrophe threatens. On Skid Row as elsewhere, hope persists long after the objective basis for it has disappeared.

## DESIRE AND INTENT TO LEAVE SKID ROW

The preceding findings raise the fundamental question, "If there is hope of self-betterment, is there also fighting spirit — do these men really intend to get off Skid Row?" This aspect of their attitudes was inventoried by the following questions, "How long do you expect to stay here? (Do you expect to move away from here? If so, when will it be?)" Table 18-4 summarizes the results in two ways — according to drinking classification and according to the degree of acceptance of Skid Row.

Only one-fourth of the men did not plan or desire to leave Skid Row. Three-fourths of the men wanted and expected to get away. Of these, only 1 in 15 doubted whether they could or would do it. Moreover, one-half of these men had a definite plan or prospects for leaving, and apparently were working toward this as a goal, while the other one-half were trying to get away at least temporarily or had hopes but no specific prospects.

The intent to leave Skid Row is higher among chronic alcoholics and alcoholic derelicts than among the teetotalers and light drinkers. Many of the teetotalers are elderly pensioners who feel that they have little chance of ever gaining enough money to live elsewhere, while the alcoholic seems to be always hoping that he will master his drinking problem, regain good employment, and leave Skid Row.

As would be anticipated, men who accept the Skid Row way of life have no plans for leaving, while almost all those who reject the Skid Row life plan and intend to leave. But among the minority who were scaled as accepting Skid Row, almost one-half were hoping to get away, and one-fourth had definite plans or hopes to leave permanently.

Intensity of Desire to Leave. — The coders were asked to read the comments about Skid Row life and to classify the men according to the intensity of their desire to leave. The result of this classification was as follows:

| | Percent of all homeless men |
|---|---|
| Does not really intend to leave . . . . . | 30 |
| Has low or moderately intense desire to leave . | 50 |
| Has an intense desire to leave . . . . . | 17 |
| Not able to classify . . . . . | 3 |

Thus, although the men talk about leaving, most do not express a strong determination to act on this desire.

Summary. — Almost all men on Skid Row regard themselves as average, normal American citizens beset with problems, but they also have hope that they will overcome those problems and leave Skid Row. The system of values and the desires for success they hold are those of the larger social system. Most of them hope to leave Skid Row in the near future. This is even more characteristic of alcoholics than of controlled drinkers. The aspirations of the Skid Row men, and the images which they have of themselves, are unmistakably favorable to rehabilitation.

Chapter 19

# SYNTHESIS: A THEORY OF WHY SKID ROW EXISTS

With this chapter we complete the descriptive and explanatory study of Skid Row and its homeless men; the remaining chapters are devoted to research on the practical question of what should be done. Together, the preceding chapters have gradually built up a picture of what Skid Row life and the men who live there are like — what is their work history, their family background, their marriage and courtship experience, and their personality traits since childhood. Here an effort is made to synthesize these materials into a few succinct hypotheses. To the question, "Why do Skid Rows exist?" two types of answers are explored — a social psychological one and a sociological one.

## A SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF SKID ROW

A scientifically valid and complete statement of causation should fulfill three requirements:

1. It must prove that the causal force antedated the effect. This is a necessary requirement, but alone it is not sufficient to constitute causation.
2. A relevant connection between the causal force and the effect must be established in the form of an hypothesis.
3. A mechanism by which the hypothesized causal influence is exerted must be postulated, observed, and established.

The data available for the present study permit only the first two of these steps to be attempted.

The social psychological approach, when applied to the present study, seeks to explain why individuals react to their social situation in such a way that they arrive on Skid Row. For possible causal forces it searches the personality and personal history of each man. Chapters 14 through 18 have concentrated on this task, and it is necessary here only to synthesize and generalize from their findings.

The second requirement is the formulation of hypotheses. A list was drawn up that contained twenty different conditions that might have helped to "cause" an individual man to come to Skid Row. The coders were instructed to search each man's entire interview, including the information and ratings of the interviewer, to determine whether each

one of these factors was or was not present. Table 19-1 summarizes the results. The hypothesized forces which were noted by the coders as acting on the men before they arrived on Skid Row are as follows, in order of frequency:

| | Percent of all homeless men | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | Total | Heavy drinkers, alcoholic derelicts | Teeto-talers, light drinkers |
| Irregular employment or unemployment (not due to drinking) | 42 | 28 | 49 |
| Chronic alcoholism, problem drinking | 38 | 85 | 9 |
| Marital discord | 28 | 41 | 19 |
| Low standard (level) of living | 27 | 23 | 33 |
| Social maladjustment | 26 | 35 | 22 |
| Wanderlust, restlessness | 25 | 39 | 17 |
| Emotional instability | 20 | 37 | 10 |
| Discontinuance of family (death of wife or parent) | 16 | 14 | 15 |
| Poor health, impairment of eyesight | 10 | 6 | 15 |
| Cultural conflict because of ethnic, religious background | 10 | 2 | 15 |
| Conflict with relatives other than wife | 8 | 10 | 7 |
| Poverty as a child | 8 | 6 | 10 |
| Physical handicaps | 7 | 3 | 10 |
| Failure in realizing ambitions | 6 | 8 | 6 |
| Poverty in old age, too old to work, limited income, not a heavy drinker | 6 | 1 | 12 |
| Extreme egocentricity (self-centered) | 6 | 7 | 7 |
| Criminal record | 5 | 6 | 4 |
| Borderline intelligence | 3 | 2 | 4 |
| Laziness | 2 | 3 | 2 |
| Orphanhood | 2 | 2 | 2 |
| None of the above: evaluation impossible | 3 | 0 | 4 |
| Average number of causes per homeless man | 3.0 | 3.6 | 2.7 |

As the last two lines of the table indicate, one or more of these causes appeared to be operating in all but about 3 percent of the cases. For the average homeless man, three causes appeared to be operating in combination. The table shows these to be the major causes:

1. Economic Hardship. — Heading this list are the hard facts of economic life. Our system seems to create a residue of chronic (though not necessarily culpable) losers, and Skid Row is the home of many of this group. Individual men gravitate to Skid Row far more frequently because of irregular employment, unemployment, and low income, than because of alcoholism.
2. Poor Mental Health. — Deep personal maladjustment and disorganization emerge clearly as a second major "cause" of being on Skid Row. Alcoholism, marital discord, wanderlust, and emotional instability each affect from 20 to almost 40 percent of Skid Row men. Almost all Skid Row men have at least one of these symptoms of personal maladjustment. Coming to Skid Row is clearly a response of persons who are emotionally disturbed.
3. Poor Social Adjustment. — Many of the Skid Row men are "marginal men" torn by conflicting cultures or religious beliefs. Others are victims of social pressures and circumstances which made it difficult for them to make a normal social adjustment.
4. Poor Physical Health, Physical Disability, and Limited Intellectual Ability. — These constitute a smaller yet substantial group of forces.

Thus, from a social psychological point of view the individual person who comes to Skid Row does so either because he is a victim of economic circumstance, because he is physically handicapped, or because he is psychologically or sociologically "abnormal."

In making this generalization, it is important to underscore the concept of abnormality. Many persons who deal with Skid Row men and alcoholism persist in using the terms "immature" or "incompletely socialized" in speaking of the Skid Row men, as if their development had been normal up to a point and was simply suspended. The data presented in earlier chapters strongly support an entirely different interpretation — that from early boyhood, the course of socialization of many Skid Row men was unusual or deviant. The many cases of violent temper, lack of career plans, lack of usual heterosexual interests, participation in delinquency gangs, and social withdrawal demonstrated this to be true. This does not mean that homeless men are vicious or psychotic, or that they are incurable. In fact, most seem to be almost pathetically harmless. However, these factors suggest that current homelessness is an essential part of their life adjustment. The truck driver who lives as a semi-isolate in a cubicle, minds his own business, drinks a few beers nightly with his friends, and patronizes a prostitute once in a while, is clearly deviant but not necessarily disorganized or psychologically immature.

Table 19-1. CODERS' RATINGS OF CONDITIONS THAT EXISTED PRIOR TO THE MEN'S ARRIVAL ON SKID ROW

| Condition | All homeless men | Marital status | | | Drinking classification | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Single | Separated and divorced | Widowed | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, derelicts |
| Total..... | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 | 100.0 |
| Chronic drinking..... | 37.8 | 30.7 | 49.6 | 19.7 | 9.3* | 25.6 | 84.7 |
| Irregular employment (not due to drinking) | 42.3 | 45.4 | 40.9 | 43.3 | 48.7 | 50.7 | 27.5 |
| Marital discord..... | 28.1 | ... | 62.6 | 1.7 | 19.3 | 26.6 | 40.9 |
| Conflict with relatives other than wife..... | 8.4 | 10.9 | 7.2 | 5.1 | 7.2 | 8.4 | 10.2 |
| Low standard of living. | 26.9 | 34.1 | 22.4 | 20.2 | 33.2 | 20.6 | 23.2 |
| Poverty as a child..... | 8.1 | 8.6 | 7.1 | 10.1 | 10.4 | 7.4 | 5.6 |
| Orphanhood..... | 1.7 | 3.0 | 1.1 | ... | 2.2 | 1.2 | 1.6 |
| Physical handicaps..... | 6.6 | 4.7 | 7.2 | 11.8 | 10.4 | 4.8 | 3.1 |
| Poor health, eyes..... | 10.5 | 7.3 | 9.9 | 27.0 | 14.7 | 8.6 | 6.3 |
| Wanderlust, restlessness..... | 25.0 | 30.4 | 22.6 | 14.6 | 16.7 | 21.1 | 39.0 |
| Laziness..... | 2.2 | 4.1 | 0.9 | ... | 1.5 | 1.9 | 3.2 |
| Borderline intelligence | 3.3 | 6.2 | 4.3 | ... | 4.2 | 2.9 | 2.5 |
| Criminal record..... | 5.4 | 3.4 | 7.2 | 6.7 | 3.8 | 7.7 | 5.7 |
| Emotional stability.... | 20.5 | 15.0 | 29.1 | 9.6 | 9.6 | 17.7 | 37.2 |
| Social maladjustment... | 26.2 | 29.1 | 28.0 | 9.6 | 21.6 | 22.2 | 35.4 |
| Egocentricity..... | 6.1 | 8.0 | 4.7 | 5.1 | 6.6 | 3.6 | 7.2 |
| Failure in realizing his ambitions..... | 6.3 | 6.8 | 7.2 | 1.7 | 6.3 | 4.3 | 7.7 |
| Cultural conflict because of ethnic, religious background... | 9.7 | 13.8 | 5.7 | 9.0 | 15.4 | 9.3 | 2.3 |
| Discontinuation of respondent's family, wife, or parent..... | 15.6 | 18.6 | 5.8 | 47.8 | 15.1 | 19.1 | 13.5 |
| Respondent too old to work, small or limited income, no family not a heavy drinker.. | 6.2 | 5.7 | 2.6 | 25.3 | 12.0 | 2.9 | 1.1 |
| Unable to evaluate..... | 3.4 | 3.6 | 1.7 | 1.7 | 3.5 | 7.2 | 0.4 |

*Includes men who at one time drank heavily but because of age, finances, health, etc. are no longer heavy drinkers; may have been on Skid Row for some time; drinking problem at time they came.

It should not be overlooked that a majority of these men come from normal and urban homes where there apparently was little conflict or emotional stress, and most of the men feel no emotional tension with respect to the home situation. Their abnormality apparently results from mistakes in childrearing or from contact with models of deviant behavior.

## A SOCIOLOGICAL EXPLANATION OF SKID ROW

The social psychological approach apparently is able to give several major reasons for individuals' consenting to live on Skid Row. The sociological explanation deals with why and how individuals of the type described above get sorted out of the total population, are collected, and become lodged in a particular neighborhood of the city. From a sociological viewpoint, the major generalization is: Skid Rows exist to

provide continued survival for familyless victims of society's unsolved social problems while these persons are in the terminal phase of their affliction and after society at large has abandoned all hope for them and has ceased to try to rehabilitate them.

The average citizen has a great deal of security against misfortune. If he gets ill (either mentally or physically), or if he shows tendencies to uncontrolled drinking, he is sustained first by members of his immediate family. They not only care for him but will try to assemble enough money for treatment. When the resources of the immediate family are exhausted, more distant relatives often lend a hand. Many employers are lenient and will assist a person in solving his personal problems. If the family belongs to a church, they can get counsel and aid there. If all of these fail, public and private welfare institutions enter the field. But when the resources of these agencies are exhausted there is only one place left — Skid Row. Thus, any average citizen could be forced onto Skid Row as a result of a series of misfortunes. The citizen with below-average resources can be forced onto Skid Row with only moderate misfortune. Skid Row contains the only institutions in the urban community that continue to care and hope for the individual when all other resources have been exhausted.

No matter how old or disabled a man is, no matter what evil he has committed, and no matter how sodden a drunk he has become, on Skid Row he can continue to exist and even find hope and help toward his rehabilitation.

But this help and hope are provided by special groups which themselves are only marginal to the larger community organization, or are highly specialized offshoots of those organizations. Like the people they serve, the Skid Row institutions are "out of bounds" for most citizens. The Salvation Army and other missions are at the same time admired and looked down upon for catering to hopeless cases. Their efforts in behalf of Skid Row men are considered to be voluntary acts of pity above and beyond the call of customary social duty.

In short, Skid Row exists because the working of social processes in our contemporary civilization creates certain types of circumstances for which society at large accepts minimal responsibility. The persons involved represent problems for which a solution has not been found. A recent book on Skid Row characterized it as a community of hopeless ego-less men who despaired of ever getting back to conventional community life. The results of the preceding chapter indicate that this is not at all correct in a majority of cases. It is society at large, rather than the homeless men, which has given up hope.

Rather than create a coherent program of help and rehabilitation, society temporizes by quarantining the men in a particular section where they may be watched over and kept under control by police. Here they

may stay until they are reached by one of the mission programs, recover without treatment, or die. From a sociological viewpoint, Skid Row is a combination poor farm and asylum with freedom of movement where the "patients" are all regarded as incurable and hence are fed, clothed, and housed but not given curative treatment.

Another socio-economic theory explains that Skid Row plays an important economic function. As will be argued in Chapter 22, this certainly is no longer true; Skid Row is a severe economic liability, both in terms of excess of cost over return and in terms of lost opportunities for other uses of the facilities.

The research materials presented here suggest that the public view of the incurable Skid Row man is incorrect. Every major category of Skid Row resident was found to have possibilities for rehabilitation. Instead of being hopeless incurables, Skid Row men gave much evidence that a well-designed program could restore a great many of them to self-support at a much more tolerable level of life and could greatly improve the adjustment of almost all. Whether or not to embark upon such a program is a decision that lies outside the scope of scientific research. However, the research findings indicate that if the public wishes it, the Skid Row neighborhood may be dissolved without undesirable side effects. Part III reports on research which was undertaken to clarify how this might be done.

## Part III

# ACTION TO CONTROL SKID ROWS AND REHABILITATE HOMELESS MEN

*Chapter 20*

# *WHAT IS ALREADY BEING DONE FOR HOMELESS MEN IN CHICAGO: AND WHAT IT COSTS*

This chapter constitutes an inventory of what is already being done for homeless men in Chicago, what is accomplished, and what it costs. It is based on data assembled from the several organizations that assist Skid Row men, supplemented by conservative estimates when data cannot be assembled directly. The inventory shows that not less than $463,550 is spent each month ($5,562,600 per year) to assist or support homeless men in Chicago. It is estimated that slightly more than three-fourths of this very large sum is used to meet the day-to-day needs of the men, or to pay the expenses of police, courts, and administrative expenses. These expenditures have no long-run effect in diminishing the size of Skid Row or rehabilitating any Skid Row resident. The city of Chicago lags far behind the private agencies in rehabilitation or remedial efforts, despite the fact that it pays a grand total of not less than $4,719,948 per year into the Skid Row areas in excess of what would be necessary if this were a "normal" residential area. Less than 2 percent of this amount is going toward trying to salvage the men, to cause the size of the area to decrease, or to diminish the magnitude of the problem.

Our inventory revealed that there are in Chicago no less than 39 different agencies that have activities or programs designed to lend aid or otherwise to deal with the problem of homeless men on Skid Row. In the last section of this chapter each of these agencies is listed and its work is described. Table 20-1 presents statistical data about the operation of these agencies. The statistics reported were submitted by the agencies themselves. A description of the program of each agency was prepared by the study director and submitted to the agency for its approval. In all cases the recommended changes suggested by the agencies were incorporated in the statements that appear in this chapter. Lest the agencies be accused of immodesty, it should be pointed out that terms of comparison or praise — "largest" or "comprehensive" — used in describing the activities of some of these organizations were inserted by the writer and not by the agencies. Where the agencies did not understand the full scope of the inquiry and hence did not report fully their activities with respect to the Skid Row problem, notes have

been added. In such cases the appended notes were not returned to the agencies for a second review, but all such notes are identified.

Table 20-1. INVENTORY OF SERVICES RENDERED TO SKID ROW MEN BY PUBLIC AND PRIVATE AGENCIES DURING A TYPICAL CURRENT MONTH: CHICAGO, 1959

| Type of service | All Chicago agencies | Public agencies | Private agencies |
|---|---|---|---|
| Number of meals given without charge: | | | |
| To "walk in" from street | 68,656 | 90 | 68,566 |
| To residents in rehabilitation program | 373,854 | 328,680 | 45,174 |
| Number of man-nights lodging--no charge: | | | |
| Temporary (1-3 nights only) | 14,758 | ... | 14,758 |
| More permanent | 125,778 | 109,560 | 16,218 |
| Number of men counseled: Alcoholism, economic, medical and welfare problems, religious, spiritual problems | 16,472 | 1,882 | 14,590 |
| Attendance at religious services: | | | |
| "Walk in" from street | 52,644 | ... | 52,644 |
| Residents--men in program | 9,940 | ... | 9,940 |
| Clothing given away (equivalent to full set of clothing) | 5,674 | ... | 5,674 |
| Medical treatment given (number of men) | 2,852 | 1,257 | 1,595 |
| First aid treatment given (number of men) | 924 | 400 | 524 |
| Dental treatment given (number of men) | 72 | ... | 72 |
| Jobs arranged for men: Temporary (number of jobs) / Permanent (number of jobs) | 6,959 | 5,336 | 1,623 |
| Recreation - number of men | 31,676 | 30,057 | 1,619 |
| Total man-months devoted to homeless men | 443 | 244 | 199 |
| Number of professional or administrative man-months devoted to homeless men | 135 | 73 | 62 |

## SUMMARY OF MUNICIPAL EXPENDITURES ON SKID ROW

Following is an estimate of the expenditures the city of Chicago, Cook County, and the state of Illinois make in behalf of Skid Row men. When the money total is multiplied by 12, to convert from months to years, it shows that Skid Row costs taxpayers $4,720,000 per year.

| Agency | Amount per month | Manpower (number of employees) |
|---|---|---|
| Board of Health of Chicago | $ 500 | 2 |
| Chicago Alcoholic Treatment Center | 3,486 | 5 |
| Chicago Department of Buildings | 700 | 1 |
| Chicago Department of Fire Prevention | 4,200 | 8 |
| Cook County Department of Welfare | 248,800 | 30 |
| Cook County Hospital | 58,000 | 32 |
| Illinois State Employment Service | 2,300 | 5 |
| Municipal Court — judicial activities | 4,000 | 10 |
| Municipal Court — social services | 677 | 1 |
| Oak Forest Hospital | 12,000 | 16 |
| Police Department | 57,966 | 131 |
| Reading Room | 700 | 3 |
| Total | $ 393,329 | 244 |

The above estimates of value of services to Skid Row men were derived as follows:

Board of Health of Chicago — Data furnished by the city.

Alcoholic Treatment Center — Assume equivalent of seven men from Skid Row continuously in residence and that one-fifth of the annual budget and staff time should be allocated to Skid Row.

Chicago Department of Buildings — Assume annual Skid Row inspection is equivalent to one inspector working full-time at the rate of $450 per month. Estimated costs of reinspection, enforcement, and so forth, of violations in Skid Row area equal to additional $250 per month. Estimate includes travel costs, administration pro-rated to Skid Row inspection, which is probably very conservative.

Chicago Department of Fire Prevention — Assume eight additional firemen on detail who would not be there if Skid Row were a normal residential neighborhood. Assume salary of $500 per month, with $200 per month expense, associated with special Skid Row inspections. No allowance for extra staff, extra equipment, at regular fire stations in the Skid Row area.

Cook County Department of Welfare — Assume load equivalent of 3,000 Skid Row men continuously, with average direct expense of $75 per month. Assume 30 caseworkers assigned to this load (100 cases per worker), with an average salary of $400 per month. Assume 5 percent of total payments are required for administration, other incidental expenses, share of maintaining offices, office staff, etc.:

| | |
|---|---|
| 3,000 x $75 = | $ 225,000 |
| 30 x $400 = | 12,000 |
| Administration (5 percent) = | 11,800 |
| Total . . . . | $ 248,800 |

Estimate contains no allowance for medical expenses (estimated as part of contribution of Cook County Hospital). This probably is a very conservative estimate. Records in the Department of Welfare indicate a larger load than 3,000. The share of overhead and administrative expense attributed to Skid Row is minimal.

Cook County Hospital — Assume a continuous load of 150 bed cases from Skid Row (including Skid Row welfare cases hospitalized — see Chapter 1) at an average actual expense of $12 per day for food, medical service, hospital expenses, and so forth. Assume further that each of the 3,000 welfare cases averages two clinic trips per year, with $5 expense for physicians' consultation and medicine. Assume further ten emergencies per day from Skid Row (D. T.'s, cuts, wounds and breaks requiring surgical care), where patient is released, at $5 per case for care and medicine:

| | | Per month |
|---|---|---|
| Hospital . . . | 150 x $12 x 30 = | $ 54,000 |
| Clinic . . | 3,000 x $5 x 2 ÷ 12 = | 2,500 |
| Emergencies . . | 10 x 30 x $5 = | 1,500 |
| Total . . . . . | | $ 58,000 |

This includes no cost for services rendered by the Social Service Department, ambulance services, visiting nurses, etc. Data given in earlier chapters suggest the estimates of clinic visits and emergencies probably are conservative.

Illinois State Employment Service — Assume that five persons are employed full-time in helping find jobs for Skid Row men, with an average salary of $400 per month. Assume that cost of renting and operating (or maintaining) a special office is $250 per month and that other expenses related to the Skid Row employment program average $50 per month:

| | | Per month |
|---|---|---|
| Salaries . | 5 x $400 = | $ 2,000 |
| Rent . . . . . | = | 250 |
| Other expenses . . | = | 50 |
| Total . . . | | $ 2,300 |

Monroe Street Court — Estimated annual salaries of officials as follows:

JUDGE HYMAN FELDMAN SPEAKS INFORMALLY WITH THE MEN BEFORE OPENING THE MONROE STREET COURT. HE KNOWS MOST OF THESE MEN BY NAME

A REPRESENTATIVE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS OFFERS HIS SERVICES TO MEN WAITING FOR COURT TO CONVENE. SALVATION ARMY OFFERS WORK AND MEDICAL CARE

| | Per year |
|---|---|
| Presiding judge (half-time) . . . . | $ 5,000 |
| State's attorney . . . . . | 7,000 |
| Referee . . . . . | 7,000 |
| Public defender . . . . . | 7,000 |
| Bailiffs (3) . . . . . | 15,000 |
| Clerks (2) . . . . . | 9,000 |
| Caseworker . . . . . | 4,500 |
| | $ 54,500 |
| Expenses of the court . . . . . | 1,800 |
| Total . . . . . | $ 56,300 |

Assume that 85 percent of the load is connected with Skid Row:

85 percent x $56,300 = $47,855 ÷ 12 = $ 3,988 per month

This makes no allowance for expenses for week-end and holiday court.

Oak Forest Hospital — Assume that at any one time there are 50 disabled and ill men transferred here from Skid Row addresses, and that actual maintenance expense of operating the institution is $8 per day per patient.

Police Department: Skid Row stations — Assume 139 men at $425 per man per month. Further assume $1,500 per month for maintenance and depreciation on cruisers, wagons, and three-wheelers. Further assume $800 per month for maintenance of one station — telephone, heat, light, and building maintenance. Assume that 85 percent of police activity is devoted to Skid Row.

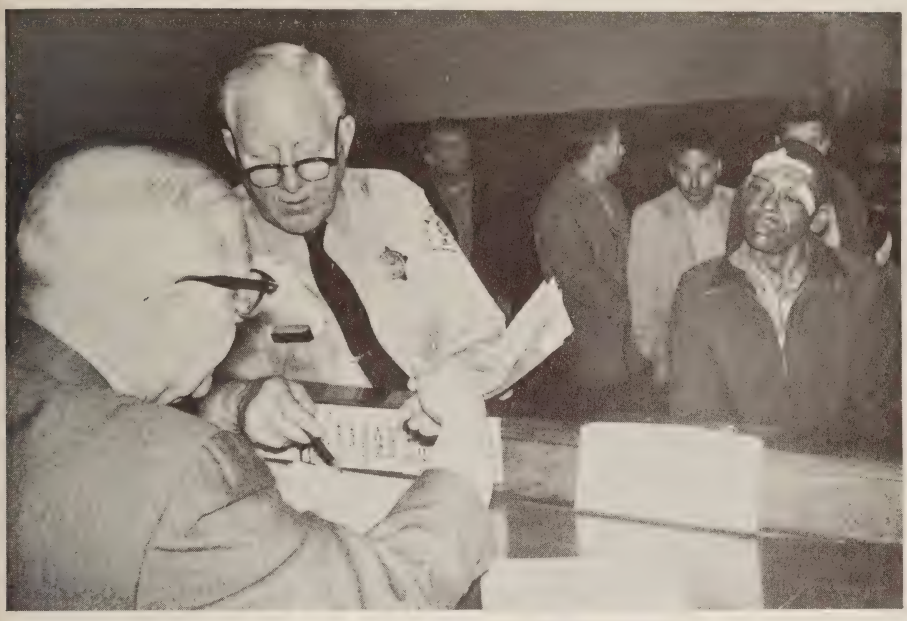
| | Per month |
|---|---|
| Salaries . . . . . | $ 59,075 |
| Depreciation . . . | 1,500 |
| Maintenance . . . | 800 |
| Total . . . | $ 61,375 x 85 percent = $ 52,169 |

Assume cost of police in North Clark Street and South State Street is 10 percent of expense at Racine Street Station:

Total = $ 52,169 ÷ .9 = $ 57,966

The amount for police has been underestimated by a wide margin. The number of police officers assigned to duty in Skid Row areas is considerably larger than indicated, and average salary levels are higher than assumed.

Reading Room — Estimated cost of salaries, rent, light, heat, etc.



A REFEREE SCREENS THE MEN. HE RECOMMENDS SENTENCES FOR MEN WHO ARE PHYSICALLY OR MENTALLY UNABLE TO CARE FOR THEMSELVES. THE REST ARE DISMISSED AFTER BEING OFFERED A JOB AND OTHER AID

SOCIAL WORKER AND REPRESENTATIVE OF ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS WORK OUT ARRANGEMENTS FOR A MAN JUST RELEASED FROM COURT

A consistent effort was made, in making these estimates, to err on the low side and to include only costs that are being incurred in excess of the costs for a "normal" residential neighborhood. It is very probably true that the total, if it could be known, is well in excess of five million dollars per year.

What does Chicago buy with this money? It goes to accomplish four major purposes. Essentially, it purchases these commodities:

| Purpose | Monthly expenditure | Percent of total |
|---|---|---|
| 1. Care of indigent Skid Row residents of Illinois (Department of Welfare, Cook County Hospital, Oak Forest Hospital) . . . | $ 318,800 | 81.1 |
| 2. Repetitive arrest and overnight detention of chronic alcoholic Skid Row men (Police and Monroe Street Court — judicial activities) . . . . . | 61,966 | 15.8 |
| 3. Inspection and enforcement of codes for health and safety (Board of Health, Chicago Department of Buildings, Department of Fire Prevention) . . . . . | 5,400 | 1.4 |
| 4. Rehabilitation (Alcoholic Treatment Center, Reading Room, Municipal Court — Social Services Department, Illinois State Employment Service) . . . . . | 7,163 | 1.8 |
| Total . . . . . | $ 393,329 | 100.0 |

At the present time the city of Chicago is doing very little that is oriented toward arriving at a long-range solution to the Skid Row problem. Only 3.2 percent of its total expenditures in the Skid Row area might be considered as attempting to improve conditions, help the men toward rehabilitation, and fight actively the complex of factors that create Skid Row. More than 80 percent of the expenditures are devoted to keeping people alive at the minimum level of subsistence our morals will allow. None of the agencies devoted to carrying out Purpose 1, above, has a budget for a vigorous rehabilitation program. These agencies are seriously understaffed and overworked, and are able only to discharge their life-perpetuating activities. There are no facilities, staff, or funds for rehabilitation or prevention, and what work of this kind is undertaken is done "on the fly."

An additional 15.8 percent of the public funds are spent in a dreary cycle of arresting chronic alcoholics, detaining them overnight and

THE READING ROOM IS CHICAGO'S BIGGEST EFFORT TO HELP SKID ROW MEN. IT PROVIDES MANY SERVICES

IT OPERATES A VERY EFFECTIVE EMPLOYMENT SERVICE FOR SPOT JOB WORK

turning them loose again on the streets the next day, only to be re-arrested, re-detained, and re-released. This daily roundup and branding by the court serves only two useful functions:

1. To protect the drunken man from exposure to the elements, and
2. To cull out the ones who are too weak, too sick or too mentally deteriorated to be "turned out to pasture."

This process does nothing to help any man stop drinking. The Referee at Monroe Street Court screens 125-200 men in less than one and one-half hours, which allows him between 45 and 60 seconds per "client."

At the present time the active constructive program of the city, county, and state consists of:

a. alcoholic treatment for 7 Skid Row men (out of a total of at least 4,800 who need it);
b. brief counseling and advice from overworked social workers at the Department of Welfare and Cook County Hospital, and from the social worker at the Monroe Street Court;
c. an opportunity to read or to clean up at the Reading Room;
d. a chance to work at spot labor jobs through the Illinois Employment Service;
e. enforcement of the city's building code that has been modified by special arrangements in such a way that living in 5 x 7 cubicles is legal.

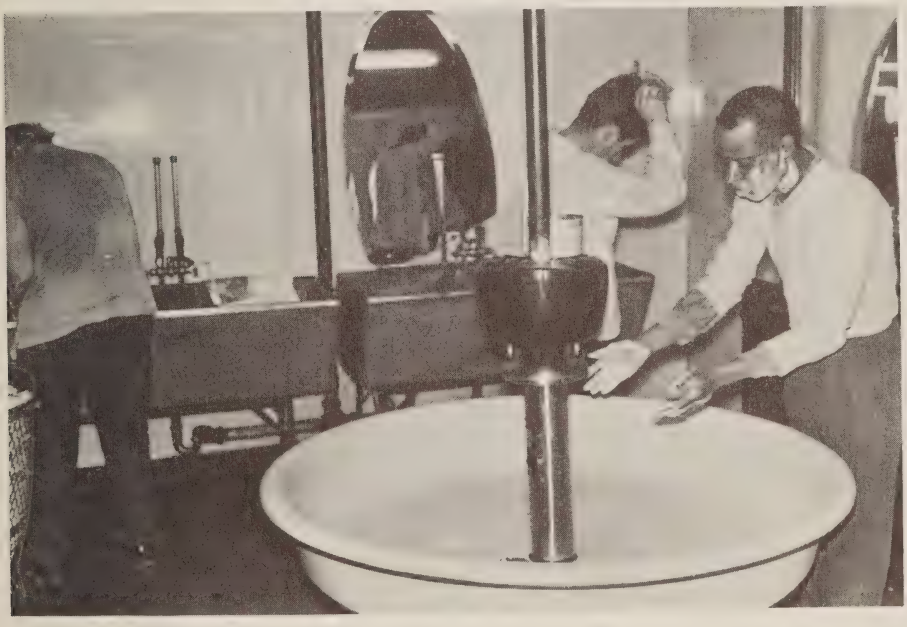
Chicago's Skid Rows are a lot better than they used to be. The above program is very important and has done much to improve conditions on Skid Row in the past few years. It is not enough, however, to constitute a full-scale program of rehabilitation and reduction of Skid Row.

## SUMMARY OF PRIVATE EXPENDITURES ON SKID ROW

The private agencies perform two important functions for the homeless men of Skid Row — providing emergency care for men who are completely destitute, and performing almost all of the efforts that are made to accomplish long-range rehabilitation. The public agencies do comparatively little work of these two types.

Emergency Care. — The man who is down on his luck and has absolutely no money can get help to keep going. He can get better clothes if he needs them, can get meal tickets or free meals by attending mission services, and can get a free night's lodging at a mission. Emphasis is given in this care to deserving men who are victims of circumstance or poor judgment, not men who are alcoholic derelicts or professional beggars who show little evidence of trying to get off Skid Row. Private-agency help is especially useful to the person who is not a legal resident of Illinois, who is waiting for his welfare status to be determined, or who has been placed, for any reason, in the embarrassing position of not knowing where he will get his next meal or where he will sleep

IT OFFERS READING MATERIAL AND A QUIET PLACE TO READ



IT OFFERS MEN WHO HAVE NO ROOM A PLACE TO CLEAN UP AND WASH THEIR CLOTHES

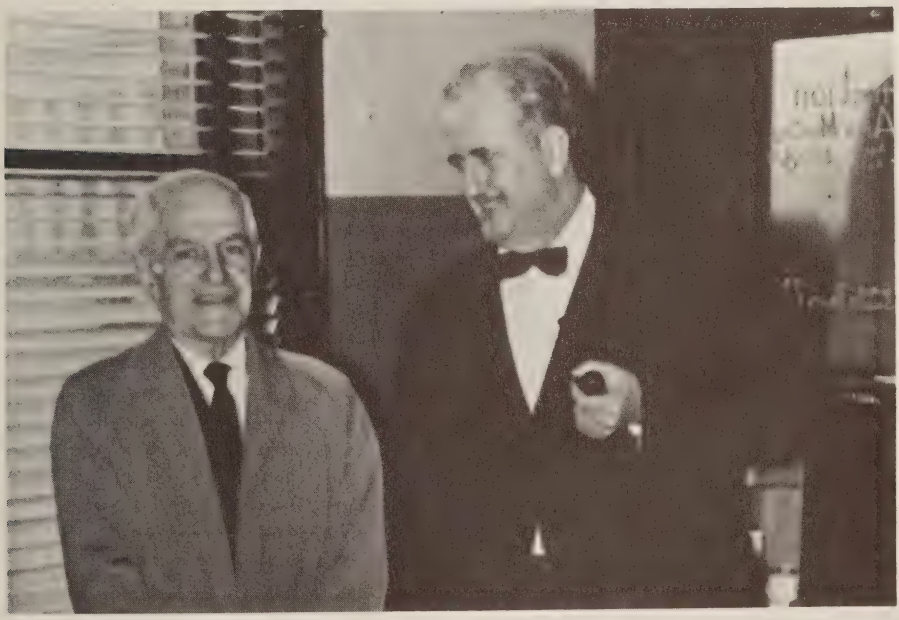
the following night. The amount of emergency help given homeless men on Skid Row is really impressive, as the following sum of their activities shows:

| Activity | Number per month |
|---|---|
| Meals given without charge to "walk-ins" from street, after religious service, etc. | 68,566 |
| Man-nights' lodging (beds) given away without charge to "walk-ins" from street, referrals, after religious service, etc. | 14,758 |
| Clothing given away (equivalent of complete sets of clothing — trousers, shirt, shoes, coat | 5,674 |
| First-aid treatment given | 524 |

Long-Range Rehabilitation. — Whereas the long-range plan of the public agencies is one of containment and caring for the minimum physical needs, the private agencies place great emphasis upon trying to cause a fundamental change in the personality or situation of the man that would cause him to be able to leave Skid Row and maintain himself in the outside community. Almost all of the present efforts being made to "do away with" or to "solve the problem of" Skid Row are being made by private missions or other groups, working in cooperative independence of each other. The following summary illustrates the situation:

| Agencies with rehabilitation programs | Estimated number of men under treatment at the present time |
|---|---|
| Total Skid Row men being treated for alcoholism and other personal problems | 640 |
| Public agencies | 20 |
| Private agencies | 620 |
| Cathedral Shelter | 6 |
| Catholic Charities | 22 |
| Chicago Christian Industrial League | 90 |
| Chicago United Mission | 10 |
| Olive Branch Mission | 32 |
| Pacific Garden Mission | 40 |
| Peter Maurin House | 15 |
| St. Leonard's House | 10 |
| Salvation Army — Harbor Light Center | 180 |
| Salvation Army — Men's Social Service Center | 200 |
| Sunshine Mission | 15 |

IT OFFERS A PLACE TO WRITE, WATCH TELEVISION, OR ATTEND TO SMALL CHORES



THE MANAGER OF THE CHICAGO READING ROOM IS MR. GEORGE COOPER. MR. FRED HOEHLER IS A SPECIAL ADVISOR

This is just a rough estimate, assuming that 7 men are in the Alcoholic Treatment Center and about 13 are at Manteno or at other public institutions.

The total volume of services performed by private agencies in trying to influence the course of the lives of homeless men is really substantial, as the following summary of their activities shows:

| Activity | Number of men helped per month | |
|---|---|---|
| | Private | Public |
| Counseling . . . . . | 14,590 | 1,882 |
| (a) To help overcome alcoholism | | |
| (b) To help solve economic, medical, welfare problems | | |
| (c) In religious, spiritual matters | | |
| Permanent and temporary jobs arranged for . . | 1,623 | 5,336 |

It is beyond the scope of the present research to evaluate the scientific validity of the long-run rehabilitation programs operated by the private agencies. Many experts in this field have serious doubts that present mission programs can ever have more than a very limited appeal, and they feel that this appeal will diminish as the educational level of even the Skid Row population rises. The doctrine that every Skid Row man is a lost soul and one of society's most grievous sinners (as proven by his present low state), and that a religious conversion will alter everything (the test of the sincerity of his conversion being that he does manage to change), does not agree either with the findings of this report or with the working of the mission programs in practice. Some mission workers who are objective enough to evaluate their own programs admit that many of the "sinners" are just victims of hard luck and that it is the society rather than the individual who should repent. They also admit that they can do little to help an alcoholic until he has hit the bottom and is so desperate that he is mentally prepared for a change — and at this moment any one of several programs can possibly be effective.

In recent years several missions have become dissatisfied with a program of religious exhortation as the sole or principal vehicle for rehabilitation and have tried to implement a broader, psychological, approach. All too often, however, these staffs have been composed of persons who are comparatively untrained or not really professionally competent in casework or therapy.

In short, so far as the long-term shrinking of Skid Row is concerned, the public agencies are doing almost nothing. The attempts of the pri-

CATHEDRAL SHELTER IS A MAJOR PRIVATE WELFARE RESOURCE FOR SKID ROW MEN—ESPECIALLY YOUNG MEN SEEKING WORK AND PENSIONERS

SEVERAL CHARITIES OPERATE SMALL SOUP LINES. THIS ONE IS SERVED BY A MOBILE VAN THAT PARKS IN AN ALLEY EACH EVENING

vate agencies are highly particularistic and uncoordinated, in a context that does not encourage scientific experimentation or cooperation among themselves and with public agencies to map out a major rehabilitation program.

## AGENCIES IN CHICAGO HELPING HOMELESS MEN

Alcoholics Anonymous. — The Alcoholics Anonymous program is widely respected by workers of many different agencies, both public and private, and by workers in many different religious faiths. It appears to be able to help many of the Skid Row alcoholics and is especially useful in helping men "stay dry" after they have come from a mission or other program for alcoholic treatment. Alcoholics Anonymous has organized several groups on Skid Row or on the fringes of Skid Row, so that its services are widely available to men who want to take advantage of them. The Monroe Street Station, the Alcoholic Treatment Center, the Salvation Army, and Catholic Charities are among those who combine AA activities with their own rehabilitation programs.

The agency reports that there is no possible means of estimating accurately the time spent in behalf of Skid Row alcoholics. It reports, "No records are kept of the endless hours spent by individuals and groups, all of them anonymous."

Board of Health of Chicago. — This agency enforces the food ordinances in establishments serving food and drink on Skid Row. After a major cleanup of Skid Row in 1950 (at which time several establishments were closed because of chronic unsanitary conditions), the restaurants and taverns of Skid Row were subject to a special quarterly inspection. It was discovered that even a period of three months was too long a time between inspections and that such establishments would become careless unless inspected more frequently. At the present time Skid Row restaurants and taverns are given special monthly inspections. If an establishment fails inspection, it is closed until a reinspection indicates that it is in compliance with the requirements of the Municipal Code of Chicago. The Board of Health also enforces in the Skid Row area the ordinance requiring compulsory chest X-rays for food handlers in eating and drinking establishments.

Cathedral Shelter. — This casework agency is under the auspices of the Episcopal Church. Men are interviewed by a casework supervisor and two counselors who advise them and, when necessary, refer them to other public or private agencies. Meal tickets are issued on various restaurants in the area. Bed tickets are given on neighborhood hotels in the Skid Row area (not all cubicle-type) and to the Wabash "Y" Hotel. Clothing is distributed by ticket arrangement from the used clothing department. Jobs are obtained through Illinois Employment Service and from private parties.

Referrals come from most of the city and suburban agencies, both public and private, as well as from private and church sources and hospitals. Care provided is determined, as far as possible, on a casework basis. Occasionally money is loaned to nonresident families until first payday. The agency often corresponds with relatives and friends.

In September, 1958, Halfway House was opened to assist in the rehabilitation of alcoholics. This unit, on the premises of the Cathedral Shelter, houses six men, most of whom have completed intensive treatment at the Chicago Alcoholic Treatment Center. Admittance to the House is on a casework basis. The House is self-governed and self-supported.

This organization is one of the principal resources in Chicago for emergency aid when a man is in desperate circumstances. It also provides aid for men released from prison or local jails, to help them get started again.

Catholic Charities of Chicago. — This agency has a very extensive program of aid to homeless men from Skid Row. It has no dormitory of its own but refers men to four local hotels and issues bed tickets to men who have emergency needs. Skid Row men are free to avail themselves of shower and toilet facilities at the Center. Three counselors devote full time to helping men with problems of alcoholism; there are also two part-time counselors. There is an AA clubroom. Each week five or six men are recommended to the Illinois State Hospital at Manteno for treatment of alcoholism. A weekly visit is paid to these men in Manteno while they are undergoing treatment, and a representative is there to meet them when they are released. When a man is released, the Center has a job waiting, preferably at a place off Skid Row where room and board are offered as part of the job.

Chicago Alcoholic Treatment Center. — Admittance to this 36-bed in-patient center for treatment of chronic alcoholism is based on voluntary admission. The Center is operated by the city of Chicago under the guidance of the Mayor's Commission on Rehabilitation of Persons. The program is a multi-therapy approach, combining medicine, psychiatry, religion, recreation, Alcoholics Anonymous, education, and research. At present approximately 20 percent of patients (7 patients) are Skid Row men. Expansion is now under way for 36 additional beds which will enlarge the Center's capacity to 72.

Chicago Christian Industrial League. — This organization is one of the major private charitable agencies on Skid Row. It is devoted to providing food, shelter, religious training, and counseling to men who voluntarily come in from the street or are referred by other agencies. The Chicago Industrial League operates the following three interrelated facilities:

1. Mission. — A primary objective is to help destitute men. Food, clothing, and a limited number of beds are given to needy recipients. Daily services are held, and food is served after the noon service. Baths, fumigation, medical service, and free employment aid are also provided.
2. Dawes Center. — This dormitory and hotel for men has a 225-bed capacity. Of these beds approximately 120-125 are given away free each night, and the remainder are rented at the rate of twenty-five or fifty cents per bed. In wintertime, the lobby of the Center is opened for overflow. Men are allowed to come in out of the cold and sleep in chairs. There is also a library, a free employment service (through facilities of the Christian Industrial League). Part of the hotel space is sub-rented to other missions who give bed tickets to deserving men.
3. Rehabilitation Center. — Housing, meals, and rehabilitation work are provided for about 80 persons in the program. A staff doctor is available part-time. Counselors try to assess physical as well as religious needs.

Chicago Committee on Alcoholism. — This voluntary, nonprofit organization is devoted to educating professional groups and the general public concerning the problems of alcoholism, and to experimenting with methods of treatment. As one of its activities it operates Portal House Clinic, an alcoholism out-patient treatment center. Patients are charged according to ability to pay, and no one is rejected for financial reasons. Since its facilities are not located on Skid Row and offer out-patient, long-term psychiatric care, comparatively few Skid Row alcoholics seek treatment there. However, the board of directors and staff of the Committee have long been interested in the problem of the alcoholic on Skid Row and have participated as advisers and consultants in discussion and plans for programs.

Chicago Department of Buildings. — Survey Inspectors of the Department of Buildings have been assigned each fall to make a thorough inspection of cubicle-type hotels and the larger rooming houses in the Skid Row area, to ascertain any violations of the Building and Housing Codes. This inspection covers structural conditions, sanitation, fire hazards, and general maintenance. Reinspections are made where violations are found; when compliance is not forthcoming, the responsible parties are brought into court and fined. Also, annual inspections are made of all theaters, churches, schools and public-assembly units, and buildings over one story in height, with certain exceptions, to assure compliance with the code provisions. Most of the cubicle-type hotels have installed sprinkler systems as an additional safety measure.

Chicago Department of City Planning. — The following paragraph of the Municipal Code of Chicago (Chapter 7-1-3) establishes the powers

and duties of the Department of City Planning:

> "It shall be the duty of the commissioner of city planning to maintain and expand a comprehensive general plan of Chicago; to coordinate the planning of specific physical improvement projects; to keep the Chicago zoning ordinance under constant review and to recommend amendments as necessary to keep pace with changing conditions; to coordinate the development of a long-range capital improvement program, and to this end the mayor shall appoint a committee made up of departmental officers, and representatives of any agency created by the city council, of which the commissioner shall act as chairman; to represent the city in its planning relationships with other governmental units in the Chicago metropolitan area; and to render necessary services, as requested, to the mayor, the city council and its committees."

All three of Chicago's Skid Rows, as the three most severely substandard residential areas in the city, lie entirely within the scope of the new planning program for central areas currently being developed by the City Planning Commission. (Second paragraph added by the author.)

Chicago Department of Fire Prevention. — In cooperation with the city's Building Department, the Fire Department has tried to lessen the danger of tragic flophouse fires, which were comparatively common until a few years ago. In 1955, the Department made a fire inspection of every cubicle-type hotel and every large rooming house in the Skid Row areas and inspected the buildings for fire-fighting equipment, fire escapes, etc. Since then, the annual inspection by the Building Department has continued this work. A special inspector is assigned to make surprise inspections of slum buildings and to cite operators for violations of the fire code.

In addition to the above, five lieutenants now inspect all cubicle hotels in the daytime; also, there are now three lieutenants and police officers who visit these types of hotels during the night hours. Their main purpose is to see that all fire escapes, doors, and fire-fighting appliances are in good working condition.

Fire stations in the West Madison Street vicinity are extraordinarily well-equipped and well-manned to handle major conflagrations.

Chicago Gospel Mission. — This mission, located at the western edge of the Skid Row area, is devoted to providing religious and material assistance to men on Skid Row. After each nightly service a meal is served, and approximately ten bed tickets are given away to newcomers, to the Dawes Center or other hotel. During the day, counseling is available to men from the street who apply. Persons in need are given clothing, first-aid, and assistance in finding jobs. (Statement prepared by the author, not reviewed by the agency.)

Chicago Housing Authority. — This agency has no program for home-

less men. Public housing is intended primarily to accommodate low-income families, but recent changes in Public Housing Law permit admittance of single persons. In Chicago, preference is given to couples, but after this demand has been satisfied, any remaining small units are available to single women fifty-five years of age or over in city-state-financed developments, and sixty-five years of age or over in federally-aided developments. In Chicago, single men are not admitted, even if elderly, but if an elderly couple occupies a CHA dwelling and the wife dies, the husband is permitted to continue occupancy of the dwelling should he so desire.

Chicago Land Clearance Commission. — The Illinois Blighted Areas Redevelopment Act of 1947 authorizes the Commission to designate as project areas:

a. Built-up areas characterized by dilapidation, obsolescence, overcrowding, lack of sanitary facilities, or other factors detrimental to the public welfare.
b. Vacant or predominantly open land that is characterized by clouded diversity of ownership, and excessive tax delinquency.

Within such designated project areas, the Commission has the following general powers:

a. Acquisition by purchase, gift, or exercise of the power of condemnation
b. Relocation of resident families
c. Demolition of existing structures
d. Installation of site improvements, such as streets, sidewalks, sewers, and water mains, in preparation for redevelopment
e. Sale of land at use value to redevelopers for the construction of residential, industrial, or commercial structures and supportting facilities, as specified in an approved redevelopment plan

Skid Row is prominently and perennially proposed for clearance. When this program reaches the action stage, the task of clearance would fall upon the Chicago Land Clearance Commission. The problems presented by such a project continue to be studied by the Commission.

Chicago United Mission. — From ten to twenty-five men who are residents are being rehabilitated and stay for one or two years usually at this 60-bed mission and shelter. Men who attend services may receive a night's lodging on a temporary basis, a meal, and (if needed) clothing after service. The work of the mission (preparation of food, cleaning up, etc.) is done primarily by men in the program. Religious counseling is given, both to men in the program and to those who apply for emergency aid. Many of the men reside in the mission and hold outside jobs, so that the mission functions as a "halfway house."

Cook County Department of Welfare. — This agency administers Gen-

eral Public Assistance ("relief") and categorical assistance — that is, Old Age Assistance, Disability Assistance, Blind Assistance, and Aid to Dependent Children. Men with Skid Row addresses are a part of the regular load.

Mr. Hilliard, the Director, was chairman of the Mayor's Committee for Homeless Men in New York, and during his tenure a shelter was established. An integrated rehabilitation program — the Hart Island Project — has been nationally recognized as one of the most successful programs for rehabilitation of alcoholics yet devised. Inasfar as feasible, the more effective elements are being incorporated into the Chicago Welfare Program, within the limits of budget and personnel. For an estimate of the volume of Skid Row men under welfare programs, see Chapter 11 of this report. (Paragraph added by the author.)

Public Assistance allowances include food and lodging, clothing, incidentals, and medical or dental care as needed. Food and rent allowances are the same for recipients of categorical and general assistance. Until recently, food allowance for an unattached man cooking in his room was $26.50, and for one eating meals in restaurants was $50.20. Rent was allowed as charged the individual man, up to maxima, which in general are higher than rents in the Skid Row area, provided he can cook in his room for $25.60 per month or eat in a restaurant off Skid Row for $50.20 per month ($1.67 per day). Recently these limits have been raised. Thus, any homeless man on public assistance probably can live off Skid Row if he wishes and if he is not paid by disbursing order to Skid Row establishments.

Medical and dental care are provided as needed through payments to doctors, dentists, clinics, hospitals, etc. The Department does not operate a clinic and has no statistics on the amount of medical care provided men on Skid Row.

A monthly cash clothing allowance is provided to recipients of categorical assistance, and amounts to purchase individual clothing items are provided recipients of general assistance as needed.

There is a program of job placement and retraining to make the men self-sustaining, to the greatest extent possible, through the Welfare Rehabilitation Service maintained by the Cook County Department of Welfare.

Welfare Rehabilitation Service also provides vocational counseling and placement service to alcoholics who belong to an Alcoholics Anonymous group that meets. It refers problem drinkers to open meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous held weekly in the office.

The Welfare Department cooperates with various groups which give direct treatment to alcoholics and pays for care provided assistance recipients at Cathedral Shelter and Harbor Light Center. Men are encouraged to leave the Skid Row area.

Cook County Hospital: Medical and Social Services. — A very large share of all medical care received by Skid Row men is dispensed by this hospital. All pensioners on public welfare receive medical care through its facilities. Emergency medical care is given to those brought by police, welfare personnel, or by self-referral. Also, the Mental Health Clinic (formerly Psychopathic Hospital) undertakes to give limited treatment for alcoholism but lacks facilities to detain a man beyond the time his strength and vitality have returned.

In conjunction with its medical care, the Social Service Department of the hospital undertakes to provide needed counseling, referrals for economic aid, contact with family, or other social services to the men who are being treated. They cooperate with other agencies throughout the city to arrange for the convalescent or chronic care of the men when they are discharged, and also for rehabilitation services for those who could use them. Many Skid Row residents are welfare cases who live in cheap cubicle hotels or rooming houses and go to Cook County Hospital every few days for a treatment, as an out-patient, for some disorder.

Illinois State Employment Service. — This organization is a leading agency in helping Skid Row men obtain employment. It maintains a Casual Labor Office at Jefferson and Madison Streets which provides spot jobs (and some steady jobs) to applicants. A representative of the Central Industrial Office goes daily to the Monroe Street police station and offers work to men being released from overnight detention. Also, Skid Row men get understanding treatment at the State Employment Service Office where jobs as dishwashers and kitchen helpers in restaurants are available. Approximately 4,800 job placements of Skid Row men are made by this agency each month. About 150 of these are for steady employment.

Indian Work of Diocese of Chicago. — Principal objectives are to support and assist Indians, both locally and nationally. In Chicago the organization works to obtain adequate housing for Indians, find employment, offer emergency assistance, maintain a clothing center for Indian people at St. Timothy's Church, maintain an emergency canned-goods shelf at the same parish, obtain scholarships for Indian young people. Counseling is offered as needed. Indian families are assisted in integrating into the parish life of the nearest parish. Local parish priests are notified concerning Indians living in their parochial boundaries. These services are available to families and individuals, both men and women.

Lutheran Home Rescue Mission. — Although this mission is oriented primarily toward helping families, it also assists men from Skid Row who apply. It holds religious services, issues clothing and shelter (tickets to Dawes Center), and gives religious counseling.

Metropolitan Housing and Planning Council. — This agency is concerned with slum problems, especially as they relate to housing conditions. In 1955, at the request of the Mayor's office, the Council attempted to establish minimum standards for cubicle-type hotels. An extensive examination of this type of hotel was made. The Council wrote a "model" dormitory-hotel code, with minimum requirements for the safety and health of the occupants, which was submitted to the Mayor.

Midwest Community Council. — This Council covers the Skid Row area of West Madison Street. Its objective is community-wide improvement and hence it is vitally interested in planning for improvement of conditions in Skid Row areas. It does not have a program of direct contact with the men, but several of the Skid Row agencies are members of the Council.

Monroe Street Court of Chicago: Judicial Activities. — This branch of the Municipal Court of Chicago is specialized in handling the cases of homeless men arrested for drunkenness or other offenses in Skid Row areas. Offenders from North Clark and South State Streets are brought here for processing, as well as the men arrested on Madison Street. The Court has appointed a referee and a public defender, selected because of their qualifications to review the cases of chronic alcoholics. This referee interrogates each man briefly and makes a recommendation to the presiding judge concerning the disposition of his case. In general, men whose only offense is that they were drunk and disorderly are discharged, provided that the man is well enough to take care of himself. In this screening process, men who have special problems in need of welfare treatment are detected and referred to the Court's social worker. Men who are dangerously ill or in need of other emergency care are detained until the social worker has seen them. Men who are suspected of being seriously psychotic and possibly in need of institutionalization are referred to the Court psychiatrist. Also, the Illinois Employment Service has a representative at the Court to offer spot jobs to men who want work and to aid men of better caliber to find permanent employment. The Salvation Army also has a representative at the Court to lend assistance to persons in acute distress or to take care of men just coming off a drunk who show signs of D. T.'s or who wish counseling.

In the past fifteen months, more than 300 recalcitrant patients have been returned to the care of the municipal tuberculosis authorities. More than 200 men who requested it have been furnished transportation to the state mental hospitals without the expense or delay of processing through the city or county psychiatrists.

The referee informs the men that the services of Alcoholics Anonymous are available to them through the Court. (AA meetings are held in the immediate area every evening, and a clubroom is maintained by

the AA at a Skid Row hotel for the purpose of feeding and helping men who say that they want sobriety.)

The entire Court and its personnel know the "repeaters" and make a considerable effort to get newcomers off Skid Row, by warning them and by trying to make arrangements for their welfare. The Court processes between 45,000 and 60,000 cases per year.

Municipal Court of Chicago: Social Service Department.— This is one of the most appreciated social services on Skid Row. The Social Service Department provides services to the Monroe Street Court for men referred by the presiding judge and the referee. Interviews are held with men immediately after their appearance before the Court, and the public and private resources of the community are utilized to meet the particular needs of each individual. The service is of a short-contact nature and is primarily a referral service. It is highly valuable to the men because they are put into contact with an agency that can help them, often by direct appointment or special intervention by the worker. A record is kept of the contact with each man. Initially, the service was established for men arrested and brought before the Court, but a large number of men seek the services of their own volition, either as a result of a previous contact or of having heard of the service from others in the community. The average number of men served is 500 per month, or about 6,000 per year. (Statement prepared by the author.)

Oak Forest Hospital.— Disabled, ill men from Skid Row are frequently referred to this hospital for the care, long-term treatment, and rehabilitation of medically indigent residents of Cook County. They are generally semi-ambulant or ambulant types, in very poor health.

Olive Branch Mission. — This mission was originally founded for the purpose of ministering to underprivileged children by giving instruction in sewing, handicraft, and the Bible. Located in the heart of the Skid Row district, the mission's activities were expanded to include nightly religious services for unemployed, homeless, and destitute men. Food, clothing, shelter, and assistance in securing employment were provided.

In addition to a resident program for homeless men, free bed tickets and free meals are distributed to men in need. A registered nurse is available part-time to administer first-aid. The resident program for about 32 men is administered by trained counselors and volunteers. Meals and lodging are provided free until employment can be secured, after which remuneration is made on a share-the-cost basis. (Statement prepared by the author from materials provided by Olive Branch Mission.)

Pacific Garden Mission. — One of the major resources for overnight shelter, meals, and emergency aid in Chicago, this mission holds morning, noon, and evening religious services, and provides food after the morning and noon services.

In the depths of the winter, when the Mission's beds are all filled, the overflow of men with no place to go are permitted to sleep on newspapers (blankets are provided for covering) on the chapel floor. Free medical (Monday, Wednesday, Friday) and dental (Tuesday and Thursday) services available on the five evenings of the week, or in emergency. A registered nurse staff-member is on duty six days a week. A resident staff is available to provide religious counseling, help the men obtain jobs, and help men get "off the bottom." The Mission also provides clothing and helps men get in touch with their families. A serviceman's lounge and dormitory are also operated to help keep servicemen on liberty out of trouble in South State Street's burlesque area.

The Mission operates a rehabilitation program for approximately 40 residents. These resident men stay approximately one year. A Women's and Children's Department is also operated on the same basis as the Men's Department. Food is provided three times daily. In emergencies, whole families are cared for until suitable housing quarters are located.

Peter Maurin House. — Two men direct this program which tries to help down-and-out men from Skid Row. About 300 men are served each evening. Food, housing, and clothing are provided. Sandwiches are served during the daytime. Fifteen men may be accommodated in the sleeping quarters. Men either come voluntarily or are referred. Many come from prison to get clothing or food.

Police Department: Monroe Street Station. — This station provides protection in the district within which the West Madison Skid Row lies. It maintains a continuous twenty-four-hour patrol of this area. Men who are drunk and staggering and obviously unable to take care of themselves or defend themselves are arrested and locked up at the station to sober up. Bottle gangs (groups of men drinking from bottles on the street or in alleys) are broken up, usually with arrests. On an average, about 125 men are arrested and locked up each day on charges of disorderly conduct or public intoxication. This totals about 45,000-60,000 arrests per year and is equal to almost one-half of the total arrests made in Chicago for offenses other than traffic violations.

Officers on foot-patrol enforce the city ordinances concerning the sale of liquor in taverns. Their primary activities consist of seeing that no tavern sells liquor to an intoxicated man, that the lives and property of intoxicated men are protected from jackrollers and other malicious persons, that there is no prostitution or soliciting by prostitutes in taverns, and that intoxicated patrons are not short-changed or taken advantage of in any way by tavern operators. They also inspect taverns and other establishments to enforce the law against gambling in all forms and the laws concerning the distribution or sale of narcotics. They prevent fighting and arrest those who are guilty of assault. Major thefts are comparatively infrequent; the officers report that homeless

men are more helpless than vicious when they are drunk.

The standing orders are to give humane, protective treatment to men who are intoxicated, to remove to Monroe Street Station men who would freeze or suffer from exposure or be subjected to dangerous attack if left on the street. The objective of this police action is not to apprehend for purposes of punishment (unless, of course, the men break ordinances for which arrest is prescribed), but for purposes of protection of the individual who is no longer able to care for himself.

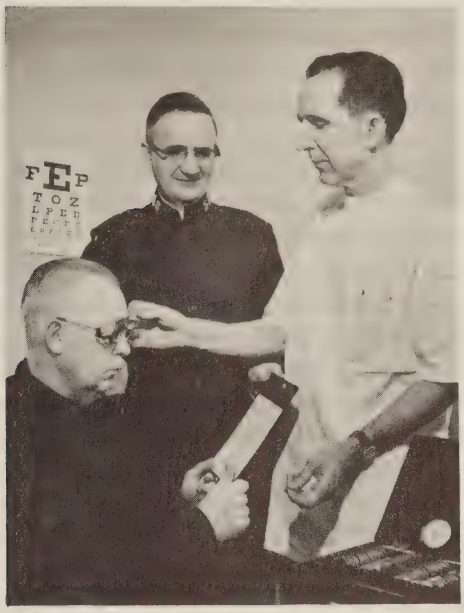
At the Monroe Street Station the intoxicated men in the "bull-pen" are given coffee and a sandwich and are detained until the Monroe Street Court is convened on the morning of each day.

Reading Room. — This reading room for Skid Row men is supplied with books and magazines. There is also a television room and facilities for bathing and shaving, first-aid, doing laundry, and sewing. Stationery is available for writing letters. The Reading Room, located in the heart of Skid Row, provides a place where men can spend their time without sitting in taverns; many men on Skid Row have no place to go during the day. The Reading Room is nonsectarian and bi-racial. Men who have no address (men who are so destitute that they sleep under bridges, in warehouses, in boxcars, etc.) frequent the Reading Room. Many men use it as a mail-receiving address, either because they have no other, or because they are afraid they might not receive pension checks sent to their hotel or rooming house.

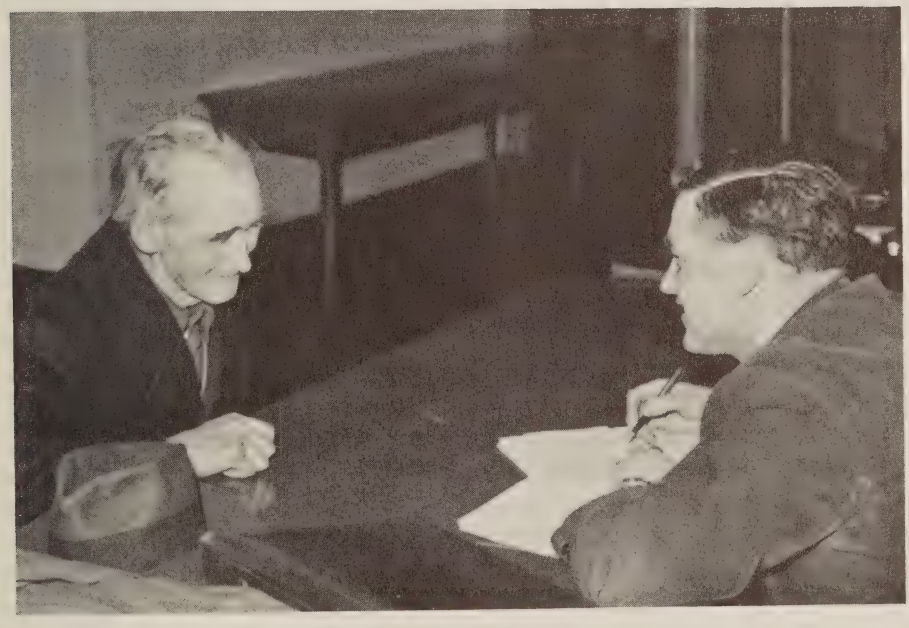
The Reading Room cooperates with all other agencies and is a very useful information and referral point for men looking for work, those who are ill, or those in other emergency circumstances. Men who are intoxicated are asked to leave. During the winter months it is severely overcrowded. The number of men desiring to come in greatly exceeds the capacity, and men must stand in line outside waiting for a turn to get in. Observers in many different organizations regard it as one of the most worthwhile welfare activities sponsored by the City of Chicago in behalf of homeless men. (Paragraph prepared by the author.)

St. Leonard's House. — A rehabilitation program is provided by this agency for selected men released from prison. In addition to providing for basic material needs, the program offers opportunity for improvement of interpersonal relationships through group living. A multidisciplinary approach is used in both individual counseling and regular group sessions. Men are taken by referral only, and a nominal fee is charged.

Salvation Army: Harbor Light Center. — The Salvation Army operates here one of the largest single rehabilitation programs for Skid Row men. Its headquarters, located in the heart of Skid Row, is an intake center for unattached, homeless alcoholics. Services are held each evening, after which the men receive a free meal. Those interested in



COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL AS WELL AS PRIVATE CLINICS PROVIDE AT LEAST MINIMAL MEDICAL CARE



SOCIAL WORKERS VISIT PENSIONERS AND GIVE WHAT HELP THEY CAN

entering the rehabilitation program are interviewed the next day by counselors who also try to help with problems other than drinking. The counseling staff consists of professional social workers, psychologists, and medical staff, as well as men who have themselves been active alcoholics. The rehabilitation program consists not only of religious instruction and services, but also psychotherapy, casework, vocational counseling, medical help, work therapy, and provision of clothing and employment. Each day the Harbor Light Center sends a representative to the Monroe Street Court to lend assistance to any man who wishes to enter the rehabilitation program or who needs emergency help that the Salvation Army is equipped to give. Coffee and doughnuts are dispensed free each morning at the Monroe Street jail to men who have been in units of the organization and to other social agencies. Referrals within the Army include Men's Social Centers, Emergency Lodge, Family Welfare Division, Correctional Services Department, clinics, hospitals, camps, and Salvation Army Neighborhood Corps. The rehabilitation program is able to accommodate about 180 residents at any one time. These men are encouraged to attend the church and other groups of their own choice, including Alcoholics Anonymous.

In addition to its rehabilitation program for alcoholics, Harbor Light Center tries to serve the other residents of Skid Row. It sponsors a Golden Agers club for elderly men. It has extended its spiritual and material care program to include psychiatric counseling and medical care. Alcoholism is recognized as a disease. To deal with the emotional and medical aspects of this illness, Harbor Light has established a psychiatric and medical out-patient clinic. The out-patient clinics were established with the aid of state funds from the Division of Alcoholism.

The Psychiatric Clinic staff consists of a director of special services, a consulting psychiatrist, psychologist, and psychiatric caseworkers. The treatment is focused on the underlying conflict which is a contributing factor to excessive drinking, and is available to individuals living in or away from the Center. The Harbor Light clinic program is a down-to-earth effort to treat and rehabilitate the alcoholic through psychiatric counseling and is aimed toward improving the total adjustment of the individual. The professional staff at the Center accepts for treatment individuals needing help who are potentially willing to involve themselves in the solution of their drinking problems. The clinic is open five days a week, Monday through Friday, from 9:00 A.M. to 4:30 P.M., and evenings by appointment.

The Medical Clinic was established in October, 1958, and at present handles an average of 500 visits per month. The Clinic is staffed by two part-time physicians, one full-time registered nurse, and one part-time registered nurse. It is open five days a week and maintains the

same hours as the Psychiatric Clinic. Services given include sedation, dressings, vitamins, and a wide variety of first-aid treatments. Referrals to other clinics and hospitals are made when indicated.

An open-door policy is followed at the Medical Clinic. Any person who may walk in off the street, as well as patients already a part of the Harbor Light program, is accepted. The clinic will treat patients by appointment when they are referred by other social agencies.

Salvation Army: Men's Social Service Center. — This program provides food, lodging, and clothing for approximately 200 men. The men enter the program voluntarily. They may be men just released from prison, referrals from other units of the Salvation Army, or self-referrals who come at the suggestion of a welfare organization.

The object of the Social Service Center is to rehabilitate men by helping them to help themselves. The program permits each man to "earn his keep" and have some spending money. At the same time he participates in a rehabilitation or therapy program which undertakes to help him overcome the condition which brought him there.

The program is geared to the development of strength of character until the man is again strong enough to assume the responsibilities of life. Proper food, rest, clothing, work therapy, and counseling are included in the program. Wholesome recreation, physical examination, spiritual guidance and encouragement, and an active program of assistance for alcoholics are all a part of the endeavor to bring men back to society.

Senior Achievement. — This program is limited to elderly persons (over 60 years of age). Its purpose is to provide supplemental income and useful, remunerative work which utilizes the many varied skills and experience of these persons. Senior Achievement operates a metal and woodwork shop, packaging and assembling workshop, engineering and drafting shop, and also operates a work service program which is available to business, industry, and social organizations. Its aim is to help older people to help themselves. The program is preventive rather than remedial. Many workers are enabled to keep off the relief rolls because of their employment here.

Elderly people are not considered handicapped at this center. It attempts to help retired persons continue their normal pattern of living as nearly as possible. In no sense can it be considered a welfare organization. A few elderly persons from the Skid Row area are participants.

Sunshine Gospel Mission. — This Mission is an independent, non-profit organization which has existed for more than fifty years. It has two programs:

1. Daily religious services followed by a meal
2. A program of rehabilitation for men with a drinking problem — about 12-15 men at any one time

Men in the latter program live in the center, have daily Bible study classes, maintain the house and do all of the needed work; many have additional outside employment. The Mission also operates a rehabilitation farm in central Wisconsin.

Travelers Aid Society. — This agency was established primarily to give emergency help to travelers who have difficulties of a societal, emotional, or medical nature. Approximately 14 percent of the persons serviced by the agency are newcomers or migratory workers who are unfamiliar with Chicago and who are in need of housing, food, or employment. In situations involving serious social, medical, or psychiatric problems, the agency offers casework service, including temporary financial help, referral to specialized Chicago agencies, and communication with the home community to mobilize resources. Some long-term residents of Skid Row apply at Society offices in transportation terminals and are given emergency services related to severe social, medical, or psychiatric problems, although the major program of the agency focuses attention on travelers.

U.S. Probation and Parole Service, U.S. District Court of Northern Illinois. — This agency supervises probation. Some of the people whom it services live on Skid Row. The agency takes responsibility for the supervision of federal probationers, parolees, and military parolees. It is also responsible for making pre-sentence investigations prior to incarceration. Probation officers perform counseling services in relation to the adjustment and attitudes of those under supervision.

Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago. — This agency has a program of community planning to improve the health and welfare services in metropolitan Chicago. The program includes identification of unmet needs, research, formulation of plans to meet the needs, and action to implement the plans. Plans may require improving standards and coordination among existing agencies, expansion of agency programs with new areas of service, or creation of new agencies. The needs of homeless men of Skid Row are a concern of the Council.

West Central Association. — This association combines corporations which are interested in reclaiming a section of Skid Row (from Halsted Street to the Canal) and incorporating it as an integral part of Chicago's downtown business district, a plan conceived by the city's present Development Plan for the Central Area of Chicago.

Young Men's Christian Association. — This organization helps young men who are new arrivals in the city by providing good lodging and meals at a reasonable price. It also provides an environment which furnishes friends, recreation, and aid in getting adjusted. For many newcomers to Chicago, this agency provides the alternative to living in a cheap hotel on Skid Row, or in the vicinity of Skid Row.

*Chapter 21*

## *GRIEVANCES, ATTITUDES TOWARD WELFARE AGENCIES, AND HOUSING PREFERENCES*

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People who are being helped by welfare agencies are not unaware of their problems. As they live with their troubles they identify each one and build up a substantial body of knowledge about it, incorporating the experience which their friends and neighbors have with the same problem. But they do even more: they develop a system of explanation of why these problems exist, and they arrive at what they think is the appropriate way to resolve them. As voting citizens they have definite ideas what the national, state and local organizations should do. Efforts to help needy people sometimes meet unexpected resistance because those being helped think the helpers are concentrating on the wrong things, or trying to bring about something that won't help at all. The homeless men on Skid Row are no exception.

It would be foolish to claim that the recipients of welfare are wiser than professional social service workers in knowing what should be done. But the wise welfare worker should want to know what the intended recipients think the basic troubles are, and what they think should be done. This is important information for at least three reasons:

a. The problem as it really exists may be quite different from the problem as perceived by the social worker. Just as a physician asks his patient about the symptoms he feels (in addition to taking objective measures of temperature, pulse, blood pressure, etc.) so the social worker should learn to use the subjective views of his clients as data for use in making a diagnosis.

b. Many of the victims of social problems are highly intelligent and perceptive people. As they deal with their problems they develop a folk knowledge, much of which has a valid factual basis. This cannot be uncritically accepted as being scientifically correct, but neither should it be rejected as worthless, as is so often done. It should be collected and given a careful review and analysis.

c. Implementation of any program of action requires the assent and support of those being helped. If there are misunderstandings about goals and means of achieving them, they should be resolved early in the program. The presence of misunderstand-

ing and disagreement between the agencies and their clients can be discovered only by knowing in detail what grievances the intended recipients have, what attitudes they have about the agencies authorized to help them, and what they think should be done. The present chapter attempts to do this for Skid Row.

## GRIEVANCES AGAINST SKID ROW INSTITUTIONS

In order to take an inventory of what the homeless men think should be changed, they were asked a series of questions toward the end of the interview about how well their needs were being served by the organizations on Skid Row. The questions were of the type, "Do you think the ____(agency) is doing a good job of ____(performing their function) on Skid Row?" The following table summarizes the responses given for the five leading types of agencies, by drinking classification of the respondents. Of those having an opinion (many said they did not know or refused to answer), the percentage distribution is as follows:

| Ratings of Agencies by Homeless Men | All Skid Row men | Teetotalers, light drinkers | Moderate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, alcoholic derelicts |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Believe agency not doing a good job: | | | | |
| Employment agencies | 43 | 38 | 46 | 48 |
| Taverns | 31 | 30 | 27 | 35 |
| Restaurants | 37 | 34 | 34 | 43 |
| Hotels | 28 | 21 | 36 | 31 |
| Police | 39 | 32 | 40 | 46 |
| Believe all agencies doing a good job | 16 | 20 | 16 | 12 |

It is clear from these figures that homeless men feel a high level of discontent for many of the key Skid Row organizations. Their dislike of Skid Row living, and of their hotels has already been described in an earlier chapter. Yet, in the above ratings, the hotels come off with the least bad rating. The greatest level of discontent seems to be with the employment agencies and the police. But restaurants and taverns are criticized only a little less severely. An impressive aspect of these statistics is that almost as great a proportion of teetotalers, light drinkers, and moderate drinkers claimed these organizations were not doing a good job as did the alcoholics and alcoholic derelicts. The complaints of homeless men can not therefore be dismissed as being entirely the ranting of drunks.

In order to place an interpretation upon this high level of grievance against Skid Row institutions, it is necessary to examine the specific grievances they reported with respect to each type of organization. In reporting these materials, we want to make it emphatically clear that these are not submitted as valid accusations or true statements of what exists. This is only the situation as the men see it, and their viewpoint is not unbiased.

Employment Agencies. — Each man was asked, "Do you think the employment agencies (including railroad hiring offices) in Chicago are operated fairly and treat the workers right? What things should they do differently?" Table 21-1-A summarizes the responses, by drinking classification. The principal complaint, voiced by almost 60 percent of those who had an opinion, was that employment agencies charge too much for their services. This included not only direct charges, but also the indirect charges. The men claimed repeatedly that their employer was paying from $.50 to $1.50 more per hour than they were receiving, and that the difference was being pocketed by the employment agency or the employer's personnel office, or split between them.

Other complaints were that the agencies play favorites — that they sell their better jobs requiring a cash payment in advance for them, that they accept bribes and tips for giving jobs, that they are in collusion with the employer or his personnel office to keep the employment temporary so that there will be greater turnover and hence more fees, that preference is given to those who borrow money from them, or that particular employment agencies hire only those who live in particular hotels. With the materials of this study it is impossible to evaluate the correctness of these claims. Moreover, if they are correct they are not necessarily illegal. It must be admitted that the chronic alcoholic, the feeble old man, or the handicapped man who is repeatedly turned away because he really is not physically able to do the work required must almost certainly feel that the employment office is playing favorites. On the other hand, these responses may contain an element of folk knowledge that is worthy of closer study.

Taverns. — Four major grievances were registered against the taverns:

a. They serve liquor to patrons when they are obviously intoxicated. This permits them to get so drunk they are helpless and an easy prey for jackrollers.
b. Jackrolling occurs in the taverns, especially in the restrooms, and pickpockets were often said to be their regular customers. Some bartenders, it was claimed, are rewarded for protecting both pickpockets and jackrollers.
c. After a man is sold liquor until he is in a drunken stupor, tavern keepers will drag or shove him into the street where he is certain to be picked up by the police and arrested, if he is not

Table 21-1. GRIEVANCES OF SKID ROW MEN AGAINST SKID ROW INSTITUTIONS, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION (Percent of all men reporting)

| Grievance | All Skid Row men | Teeto-talers, light drinkers | Mod-erate drinkers | Heavy drinkers | Dere-licts |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. GRIEVANCES AGAINST EMPLOYMENT AGENCIES | | | | | |
| They charge too much for their services | 59 | 66 | 44 | 64 | 58 |
| Accept bribes and tips for giving jobs | 8 | 5 | 7 | 10 | 14 |
| Sell their good jobs, require cash | 10 | 14 | 12 | 2 | 8 |
| Are in collusion with employer, split fees | 5 | 8 | 7 | 2 | ... |
| Send checks to a saloon to be cashed | 1 | 2 | ... | ... | ... |
| Loan money and charge too much interest or give priority to men who owe them | 2 | ... | 2 | 2 | 4 |
| Play favorites with their friends | 14 | 14 | 19 | 11 | 8 |
| Give worst jobs to Negroes, other minorities | 3 | 3 | 7 | 2 | ... |
| They should be regulated by law--general | 7 | 3 | 5 | 11 | 12 |
| Other grievances, general dislike | 8 | 7 | 9 | 9 | 8 |
| No grievances mentioned, no response | 59 | 64 | 61 | 48 | 58 |
| B. GRIEVANCES AGAINST TAVERNS | | | | | |
| Serve liquor to drunken patrons | 35 | 40 | 35 | 34 | 27 |
| Short change patrons, take money while drunk | 18 | 7 | 17 | 14 | 30 |
| Permit jackrolling, especially in restrooms | 26 | 13 | 22 | 46 | 30 |
| Permit prostitutes to solicit | 4 | 4 | 6 | 7 | ... |
| Permit begging for drinks | 8 | 9 | 10 | 3 | 9 |
| After letting a man get drunk, drag him into street for police to pick up | 20 | 22 | 10 | 19 | 31 |
| Sell liquor on Sunday, out of hours | 1 | 2 | 2 | ... | ... |
| Substitute cheap liquor for good, water their liquor, sell bad liquor | 6 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 10 |
| Their restrooms are dirty | 4 | ... | 5 | 7 | 8 |
| Their glasses, dishes are not clean | 13 | 12 | 17 | 12 | 9 |
| No grievances mentioned, no response | 66 | 73 | 63 | 63 | 52 |
| C. GRIEVANCES AGAINST RESTAURANTS | | | | | |
| Dishes poorly washed | 6 | 4 | 4 | 14 | 4 |
| Kitchen is not clean | 11 | 8 | 9 | 10 | 20 |
| Counters, tables, serving area not clean | 54 | 51 | 63 | 53 | 54 |
| Employees wear dirty clothes, unbathed | 10 | 7 | 14 | 7 | 16 |
| Food not handled in sanitary way | 7 | 6 | 16 | 3 | 4 |
| Mice, rats, vermin present | 1 | 1 | ... | ... | 3 |
| Cooks, waiters, kitchen help, dishwashers have T.B., do not have health inspection | 15 | 11 | 14 | 19 | 20 |
| Serve food left uneaten by previous customers, or serve stale, spoiled food | 13 | 9 | 10 | 24 | 13 |
| Serve left-over, cheapest, poorest quality food | 21 | 24 | 12 | 21 | 23 |
| Prices too high for what you get | 24 | 33 | 17 | 20 | 18 |
| Poor refrigeration | 1 | 1 | ... | 3 | ... |
| No toilets for patrons | | | | | |
| Insufficient hot water | | | | | |
| No grievance, no response | 54 | 55 | 62 | 52 | 38 |
| D. GRIEVANCES AGAINST HOTEL | | | | | |
| Cleanliness | | | | | |
| Floors, walls not kept clean | 5 | 5 | 7 | 3 | |
| Dirty linen, sheets not changed often enough | 15 | 10 | 7 | 24 | |
| Toilets, lavatories and shower not kept clean | 12 | 8 | 12 | 13 | |
| Presence of vermin | 5 | 8 | 2 | 6 | |
| Presence of odors | 3 | 6 | 2 | 2 | |
| Dirty, vague, general | 68 | 64 | 69 | 69 | |

Table 21-1. GRIEVANCES OF SKID ROW MEN AGAINST SKID ROW INSTITUTIONS, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION (Percent of all men reporting) - Continued

| Grievance | All Skid Row men | Teeto-talers, light drinkers | Mod-erate drinkers | Heavy drinkers / Dere-lict |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| D. GRIEVANCES AGAINST HOTEL - Continued | | | | |
| Service | | | | |
| Towels and soap not provided | 5 | 2 | 7 | 5 |
| Not enough heat in winter | 9 | 9 | 11 | 9 |
| Linen is not decent (not washed white, torn, worn | 4 | 3 | 7 | 2 |
| Need to spray with disinfectant, vermin repellent | 6 | ... | 3 | 13 |
| Lobby facilities not adequate (no TV, space, etc.) | 4 | 13 | 5 | 3 |
| Management | | | | |
| Clerks drink on the job | 2 | ... | 3 | 2 |
| Clerks not honest, will overcharge, jackroll | 8 | 6 | 9 | 9 |
| "No refund" policy of management | 1 | ... | ... | 4 |
| Clerks, porters too brutal | 5 | 2 | 2 | 12 |
| Not enough personnel for firewatch, to keep clean | 36 | 36 | 28 | 40 |
| Fire hazards and building conditions | | | | |
| Fire precautions neglected, not safe from fire | 12 | 6 | 18 | 14 |
| Building not maintained--in need of repairs. | 14 | 15 | 9 | 16 |
| Not enough toilets, lavatories, showers | 3 | ... | 9 | 2 |
| Price | | | | |
| Charge too much for what they give | 23 | 32 | 23 | 12 |
| Other: vague, general | 13 | 17 | 12 | 9 |
| No grievance, no response | 71 | 73 | 70 | 69 |
| E. GRIEVANCES AGAINST POLICE | | | | |
| Jackrolling, all types | 23 | 15 | 23 | 30 |
| Police take money on way to station or at the station | 11 | 7 | 12 | 14 |
| Police arrest and let you go if you pay | 3 | 3 | 3 | 4 |
| Respondent claims he has been jackrolled personally by the police | 4 | 2 | 2 | 7 |
| Graft, bribes, all types | 8 | 8 | 8 | 7 |
| Police drink in taverns, while on duty, do not pay the management | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Police demand payment from hotel, tavern owners for being called; expect Xmas gifts | 2 | 1 | 3 | 2 |
| Police accept graft from bookies, other illegal activities on Skid Row | 1 | 1 | 1 | 1 |
| Brutal and callous | | | | |
| Police hit, club, kick needlessly | 5 | 3 | 7 | 7 |
| Police arrest men not drunk, make them lose jobs | 9 | 4 | 13 | 11 |
| Derelict in duties | | | | |
| Police see jackrolling, do nothing to stop it, laugh or turn a deaf ear if Skid Row man goes to police with a complaint | 4 | 1 | 2 | 7 |
| Other failures to protect or enforce law | 11 | 1 | 11 | 11 |
| No comments, no grievances, no response | 57 | 66 | 52 | 50 |

jackrolled first. This seems to be a rather hard and calloused procedure — especially when it is done repeatedly to the same persons.

d. The taverns are said to shortchange their customers after they reach a certain stage of intoxication. A man may come in with his paycheck and give it to the bartender. As he drinks and gets intoxicated he may irresponsibly order drinks for himself and his friends until it is gone. How much was consumed cannot be determined, and some men believe the barkeeps are not always straight in their accounting.

Other grievances were that the taverns are not sanitary in their service, that they permit begging and prostitution, and that they sometimes sell liquor that is of very inferior quality or even injurious to health.

Although these charges should not be dismissed entirely without investigation, it is clear that few men on Skid Row are in a position to be unbiased about taverns. The teetotalers and light drinkers dislike them because they believe they are partly responsible for the alcoholism they dislike. The heavy drinkers and chronic alcoholics can transfer to others a little of the responsibility for their uncontrolled drinking by accusing the bartenders of serving them after they are intoxicated.

Restaurants. — About one-half of the men who had an opinion said the restaurants were not clean. More than one-fifth complained about the poor quality of the food and about prices that were too high for the type and amount of food sold. A substantial proportion complained that the dishes are not properly washed, the kitchens are not clean, the employees wear dirty clothes and handle food in an unsanitary way, and food handlers often are hired without being required to have a chest X-ray or health inspection.

Hotels.— Table 21-1-D summarizes the complaints against the hotels. They reinforce, in somewhat a different way, the materials already presented in an earlier chapter. The grievances tend to fall into a few broad classes: the hotels are not clean; the personnel is inadequate; many hotels are not fireproof; the price is too high for what you get.

Police. — The data concerning police were collected in 1958; in 1959-60 the Police Department of Chicago underwent extensive reorganization to eliminate abuses. The police organization in the Skid Row area was given special attention in this reorganization. It is beyond the scope of this survey to evaluate the data of Table 21-1-E, where substantial proportions of the men claimed that at the time of the study police were actively jackrolling, taking bribes and gifts for performing assigned duties; that they were brutal and callous; that they were derelict in their duties. The Skid Row men (especially the heavy drinkers) have reason to dislike the police. It is the duty of the police to hunt down drunks on

Skid Row and arrest them. One cannot expect completely objective reports about the police from their quarry. On the other hand, these data suggest that police assigned to Skid Row duty must be selected for their character and ability to resist the temptation to take advantage of their authority.

## RATINGS OF PUBLIC AND PRIVATE WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS

After each homeless man had reported his grievances, if any, against the major Skid Row institutions he was then asked to rate each of the public and private welfare agencies, according to how good a job they are doing. Table 21-2 reports these ratings for each of ten organizations. This inquiry revealed that the men show strong approval for the

Table 21-2. RATINGS WHICH THE SKID ROW MEN GIVE THE PUBLIC AND PRIVATE WELFARE ORGANIZATIONS ON SKID ROW

| Organization | All Skid Row men | Teeto-talers, light drinkers | Mod-erate drinkers | Heavy drinkers, dere-licts |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. COOK COUNTY WELFARE DEPARTMENT | | | | |
| Good or very good | 60 | 60 | 66 | 55 |
| Bad or not so good | 13 | 16 | 12 | 12 |
| Not rated | 27 | 24 | 22 | 33 |
| B. SALVATION ARMY | | | | |
| Good or very good | 73 | 73 | 76 | 71 |
| Bad or not so good | 10 | 9 | 9 | 14 |
| Not rated | 17 | 18 | 15 | 15 |
| C. REFEREES, JUDGES, SOCIAL WORKER AT MONROE STREET COURT | | | | |
| Good or very good | 46 | 38 | 45 | 57 |
| Bad or not so good | 10 | 7 | 10 | 14 |
| Not rated | 44 | 55 | 45 | 29 |
| D. DAWES CENTER, CHRISTIAN INDUSTRIAL LEAGUE | | | | |
| Good or very good | 28 | 32 | 29 | 24 |
| Bad or not so good | 27 | 12 | 24 | 45 |
| Not rated | 45 | 56 | 47 | 31 |
| E. CATHOLIC CHARITIES | | | | |
| Good or very good | 64 | 64 | 60 | 68 |
| Bad or not so good | 5 | 7 | 6 | 2 |
| Not rated | 31 | 29 | 34 | 30 |
| F. PACIFIC GARDEN MISSION | | | | |
| Good or very good | 56 | 53 | 60 | 58 |
| Bad or not so good | 14 | 14 | 8 | 18 |
| Not rated | 30 | 33 | 32 | 24 |
| G. COOK COUNTY HOSPITAL | | | | |
| Good or very good | 69 | 67 | 76 | 68 |
| Bad or not so good | 12 | 13 | 11 | 9 |
| Not rated | 19 | 20 | 13 | 23 |
| H. READING ROOM | | | | |
| Good or very good | 66 | 52 | 75 | 72 |
| Bad or not so good | 8 | 8 | 4 | 10 |
| Not rated | 26 | 40 | 21 | 18 |
| I. ALCOHOLIC TREATMENT CENTER | | | | |
| Good or very good | 64 | 64 | 60 | 68 |
| Bad or not so good | 5 | 7 | 6 | 2 |
| Not rated | 31 | 29 | 34 | 30 |

program of these organizations, with only a comparatively small amount of dislike for their work. Their level of criticism was much below that they showed for the employment agencies, the restaurants, the taverns, the hotels, and the police. Of those having an opinion, the percent saying that the agency was not doing a very good job was as follows:

| Agencies Rated by Homeless Men | Percent claiming agency not doing a very good job |
|---|---|
| Dawes Center, Christian Industrial League | 27 |
| Cook County Department of Welfare | 13 |
| Pacific Garden Mission | 14 |
| Cook County Hospital | 12 |
| Salvation Army | 10 |
| Monroe Street Court, including welfare | 10 |
| Reading Room | 8 |
| Alcoholic Treatment Center | 5 |
| Catholic Charities | 5 |

In general, the teetotalers and light drinkers rated the performance of these agencies higher than did the heavy drinkers and alcoholic derelicts. However, the alcoholics showed more appreciation for Cook County hospital, the program of the Cook County Welfare Department, and the Alcoholic Treatment Center, than did the teetotalers.

## HOUSING PREFERENCES OF HOMELESS MEN

Preceding chapters have reported the desires and hopes of Skid Row men with respect to employment, drinking, family life, and many other topics. However, the housing attitudes of the men have not been reported. This is a fundamental issue, for 95 to 100 percent of Skid Row housing is substandard by all current criteria, and urban renewal or community conservation are therefore out of the question. Solving the Skid Row problem will involve complete rehousing of the men. It is therefore important to know what they regard as appropriate or desirable housing. It would be highly wasteful to construct great quantities of a type of housing from which the men will flee at the earliest possible moment, and avoid moving into if possible.

Each homeless man interviewed was asked these two questions:

1. Suppose some of the men's hotels on ____(West Madison, North Clark, South State) are torn down to make way for better housing. And suppose that new housing is to be built especially for you men who live here, to rent at a price you can afford to pay. What kinds of places to live should be built for you?

2. Here is a list of different kinds of places: open dormitories, cubicles or cages, single rooms for each man as in a YMCA, apartments where two or three men could live together and do their own cooking and housekeeping. Which of these would you like best for yourself?

The responses to these questions are tabulated in Table 21-3-A. Two types of housing were preferred overwhelmingly — "single rooms" and "light housekeeping apartments." A total of 92 percent of the respondents who made a choice preferred either single rooms or apartments. Cubicles were chosen by only 1 percent and open dormitories were suggested by 5 percent.

Surprisingly, nearly all of the 42 percent who indicated they would like to have a light housekeeping place — a room with cooking facilities — insisted they wanted to have sole occupancy. Hence, the vast majority of homeless men want either to live alone in a single room or to live alone in a room where they can cook.

Table 21-3. TYPE OF HOUSING DESIRED BY HOMELESS MEN ON CHICAGO'S SKID ROW, BY DRINKING CLASSIFICATION

| Response | Total Skid Row | Drinking classification | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | Teeto-taler | Light | Mod-erate | Heavy | Dere-lict |
| A. TYPE OF HOUSING DESIRED | | | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Open dormitories | 5 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 5 | 8 |
| Cubicles or cages | 1 | 2 | 2 | ... | 1 | ... |
| Single rooms | 49 | 50 | 51 | 44 | 48 | 53 |
| Apartments for joint occupancy | 6 | 2 | 7 | 9 | 5 | 5 |
| Apartment alone | 35 | 38 | 34 | 37 | 38 | 28 |
| Own house (detached) | 1 | ... | 1 | ... | 2 | 3 |
| Other | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... | ... |
| No information | 3 | 4 | 2 | 5 | 1 | 3 |
| B. RENT HOMELESS MEN COULD PAY PER WEEK | | | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Nothing | 5 | 5 | 3 | 2 | 8 | 9 |
| $1-2 | 2 | ... | 2 | 2 | 3 | 1 |
| $3-5 | 30 | 29 | 30 | 31 | 28 | 36 |
| $6 | 11 | 7 | 11 | 12 | 12 | 12 |
| $7 | 13 | 14 | 14 | 6 | 16 | 16 |
| $8 | 11 | 11 | 13 | 16 | 5 | 6 |
| $9-10 | 15 | 18 | 15 | 14 | 16 | 8 |
| $11-12 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 7 | 5 | 4 |
| $13-15 | 5 | 6 | 3 | 6 | 4 | 6 |
| $16 and over | 1 | 3 | 2 | 1 | 1 | ... |
| No information | 3 | 4 | 1 | 4 | 2 | 2 |
| C. WHO SHOULD MANAGE? | | | | | | |
| Total | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 | 100 |
| Private business men | 36 | 35 | 37 | 35 | 39 | 28 |
| City of Chicago | 48 | 49 | 45 | 47 | 45 | 57 |
| Federal government | 1 | ... | ... | 1 | 1 | 3 |
| Don't know | 13 | 11 | 16 | 11 | 12 | 11 |
| No information | 3 | 6 | 2 | 5 | 2 | 1 |

These two forms of housing were preferred over all others by the men, irrespective of drinking classification. However, the men on West Madison and South State Streets were more inclined to vote for single rooms in preference to other places, whereas the men in the South Clark-Van Buren and the North Clark areas were more disposed to prefer light housekeeping arrangements. Not even the alcoholic derelict wants a cubicle. Open dormitories are condemned almost as completely. From the viewpoint of the men, rebuilding with bigger and fancier dormitories or cubicles would only be rebuilding Skid Row.

How Much the Men Can Pay. — After asking the men in which type of housing they would prefer to live, they were asked, "If a place like that (the one chosen by the respondent) could be built so that it is modern, clean, and well-run, how much a week would you be willing and able to pay to stay there?" In tabulating the responses to this question, an attempt was made to be realistic. If the man had no work and was a pensioner, the amount specified was the amount now allowed him by the Department of Welfare. If the man had been working at a good job, but was now unemployed, the amount he was now paying for a hotel room was indicated, rather than some amount he insisted on stating he could pay if he had a good job. In other words, the statistics of Table 21-3-B not only indicate what the men say they are willing to pay, but they also indicate as reliably as possible what they actually were able to pay at the time of the interview. About 7 percent, 800-850 men, could pay almost nothing for a room. These men were sleeping out or trying to live off the missions. About 30 percent, 3,600 men, were able to pay the $3 to $5 per week it now costs to stay in a cubicle. But almost 35 percent indicated they could pay between $6 and $8 a week, which is roughly the price at which single rooms might be made available commercially without subsidy. Thus, roughly 4,200 men not only desire to move out of cubicles into single rooms, but would be able to afford such rooms if they were available.

Moreover, a total of 27 percent reported they could pay $9 or more per week. This is the range at which simple, bare-minimum light-housekeeping rooms might be made available commercially without subsidy. Thus, approximately 3,250 men would be in the market for such living quarters if they were available. There is little variation in ability to pay with regard to drinking classification.

Management of the Housing. — After inquiring about the type of living accommodations he desired and the amount he was able to pay, each respondent was asked, "Who do you think should manage these places, private businessmen or a government housing agency run by the city of Chicago?" The answers to this question were not flattering, either to private businessmen or to the city (Table 21-3-C). In general, about one-half, when pressed, chose the city of Chicago, and 37 percent

chose private businessmen. Even though the federal government was not mentioned, 1 percent insisted on specifying that the rehousing of Skid Row areas should be placed under federal control.

## SUMMARY

Skid Row men were very dissatisfied with the performance of their major institutions when interviewed in 1958. They cited many grievances against employment agencies, taverns, hotels, restaurants, and the police. Some of these have been corrected since.

The men expressed approval and appreciation of the work of the public and private welfare agencies, although a fraction of the men were highly critical. Some of the agencies received much more praise than others.

Homeless men have very definite ideas about what kind of housing should be built for them when Skid Row is demolished. They are almost unanimously opposed to cubicle hotels and open dormitories. Instead, they aspire to single rooms (even if very simply built and austerely furnished) or to one-man efficiency apartments where they can prepare their own meals. They do not want to share their quarters with another man, but prefer to live alone. This pattern characterizes elderly men, workingmen, and heavy drinkers alike.

A careful study of how much rent the men could pay suggests that about one-half of the men could afford better housing of the type they desire if it is provided on a low-cost, minimum-profit basis. It is not unlikely that this type of housing could be provided and operated by private enterprise more effectively than as a municipal project, if the enterprisers are selected from the most humane and civic-minded businessmen who have already succeeded in operating a quiet, clean, sober, and safe residence for Skid Row men at low rentals. There are such businessmen on Skid Row.

It would be well for planners and welfare agencies to become sensitive to the grievances, evaluations, and opinions which Skid Row men hold concerning their problems. Even if these are wholly wrong, they exist and will be encountered in any effort to take action.

Chapter 22

# VIEWS OF RESOURCE PERSONS ON REHABILITATION OF HOMELESS MEN ON SKID ROW

When the resource persons were interviewed, they were asked, "What should be done about Skid Rows and the people who live on them?" Replies to this question are tabulated and summarized here. It must be remembered that they were offered before any of the materials which came from the homeless men themselves had been analyzed and made available. It is entirely possible that the resource persons may "switch their votes" with respect to particular types of welfare or housing actions on reading the results of this research.

The tabulation of the resource persons' recommendations showed that these experienced observers were in essential agreement on a program of action. Although they probably were not aware of the fact, the broad outlines of a program that could elicit the support of both welfare and housing experts already had been formulated in the minds of the persons most familiar with the situation. Years of contact with the problem, thinking and reading about it, discussing it with others, and observing the failure and success of particular efforts had brought some recommendations into favor while others were neglected. To be sure, there is not full unanimity, and there is considerable diversity on a few specific items. But there is consensus on almost all of the leading issues.

The interviews with the resource persons were preceded by a reading of available literature and informal discussions with selected resource persons to learn what the major proposals for action were. The list of formal questions submitted to the experts represented an inventory of the suggestions that had been made, as nearly as it could be determined by the investigators.

The recommendations of the resource persons were obtained during the interview by a two-step procedure. First there was an exploration of their views in the form of an informal conversation. This was followed by more formal questioning to find out whether they approved or disapproved of particular types of possible actions, and how strong was their approval or disapproval. In presenting these materials, this sequence has been reversed: the questions and answers concerning specific measures are reproduced first, and then, in edited form, the

informal answers are presented as reasoning on which the judgments were based. Persons who disagreed with the specific proposals often suggested alternatives, and these are included here also.

The present chapter contains the recommendations concerning health, rehabilitation, and welfare, and is divided into five sections as outlined below:

I. Outline of a General Program for Health, Rehabilitation, and Welfare
II. Outline of a Program for the Treatment of Alcoholism
III. Organization of Efforts to Accomplish a Rehabilitation Program
IV. Recommendations concerning Treatment of Alcoholics
V. Recommendations to Assist Homeless Men Who Are Not Alcoholics

## I. OUTLINE OF A GENERAL PROGRAM FOR HEALTH, REHABILITATION, AND WELFARE

It is frequently said that prevention of degeneracy and rehabilitation of homeless men must accompany a major housing attack on the problem of homeless men if long-run success is to be accomplished. This means that a welfare program and a housing program must be integrated with each other. This section undertakes to inventory your ideas concerning the elements of a welfare program that would be both effective and practical.

In your opinion, what should be the elements of a program of rehabilitation and prevention of degeneracy in homeless men areas? Here are some possible activities. We would like to know how you feel about including each of the following activities as part of a comprehensive program for homeless men areas.

A. Nothing should be done in addition to present facilities available for all citizens.

| | |
|---|---|
| Approve | 5 percent |
| Disapprove | 81 percent |
| Can't decide | 14 percent |

B. A unit should screen homeless men applying at health, welfare, or charitable agencies for assistance. The men should be referred to the proper agency, with preliminary recommendations for a program of help or rehabilitation.

| | |
|---|---|
| Approve | 83 percent |
| Disapprove | 5 percent |
| Can't decide | 12 percent |

C. If the city has a municipal shelter program, the admission of persons to this shelter, the conditions under which they remain, and the standards of conduct they must maintain should be regulated by welfare authorities.

Approve . . . . . 79 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 6 percent
Can't decide . . . . . 15 percent

D. Facilities should be provided to counsel and advise applicants concerning personal, financial, or other problems that may be contributing to their present condition.

Approve . . . . . 90 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 2 percent
Can't decide . . . . . 9 percent

E. Facilities should be provided for obtaining clothing and arranging for meals and essential expenses for non-alcoholic men in need of temporary assistance while finding work and getting their first pay.

Approve . . . . . 86 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 3 percent
Can't decide . . . . . 11 percent

F. Facilities should be provided for helping applicants obtain employment, both regular and temporary.

Approve . . . . . 90 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 1 percent
Can't decide . . . . . 9 percent

G. Facilities should be provided for helping applicants obtain needed medical, psychiatric, or health care.

Approve . . . . . 91 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 1 percent
Can't decide . . . . . 9 percent

H. Facilities should be provided for inspecting and observing the living conditions and operating practices in hotels, lodging-houses, restaurants, taverns, and other business establishments serving these men, and to bring to the attention of police, health authorities, or others, instances of violations of municipal codes that affect the health, safety, or welfare of the homeless men.

Approve . . . . . 91 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 3 percent
Can't decide . . . . . 7 percent

I. Facilities should be provided to seek the aid of the men's fami-

lies in an effort to get financial support and assistance in effecting their rehabilitation.

Approve . . . . . 70 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 15 percent
Can't decide . . . . . 15 percent

J. Facilities should be provided for a city-wide program of low-cost, all-season recreation for low-income homeless persons that would make it possible to find companionship and recreation without recourse to taverns. This could include recreation rooms, TV, clubs and interest groups, therapy classes.

Approve . . . . . 85 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 4 percent
Can't decide . . . . . 11 percent

K. Facilities should be provided for occupational retraining and rehabilitation of non-alcoholic men with physical handicaps or low degrees of skill.

Approve . . . . . 92 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 1 percent
Can't decide . . . . . 7 percent

Suggestions by resource persons:

What about parolees? They also are homeless men. Something should be said and done about the problems they face and some facility should be provided for their development and re-entry into society. The two problems might be considered together.

The legal barrier of residence requirements should be abolished — especially for aid that would help the man become self-supporting.

I would suggest that the magistrate court with authority for summary convictions and the workhouse, house of correction, and jails are the natural "screening depots" for the homeless men who are drunk and disorderly or vagrant. We should work to enable proper staffing there, since so many of the clients of agencies with homelessness as one of their problems show up in these places sooner or later.

If a program is established, it should be an integrated one, so that the public and private resources are utilized. Such a program should be set up as a welfare unit either of city or county and placed within as part of proper administration.

It might not be a bad idea to have a small emergency clinic, operated as an outpost of Cook County Hospital, located in the area. It would relieve the pressure on County and probably would get the men to come in for badly-needed medical help — especially the old pensioners. Visit-

ing nurses have an awful time going through those cage hotels; many of them just refuse to go.

## II. OUTLINE OF A PROGRAM FOR THE TREATMENT OF ALCOHOLISM

In your opinion, what should be the elements of a program of rehabilitation and prevention for chronic alcoholism in homeless men areas? Below are listed some possible activities. Please indicate whether you approve or disapprove having each activity included as a part of a comprehensive program for homeless areas.

A. The first offense of drunkenness or disorderly conduct involving drunkenness should be regarded very seriously throughout the city, and a special program of prevention should be installed. Instead of being fined or sentenced to jail, each first offender should be sentenced to an alcoholism-prevention clinic for a period of three days. During this time he would be interviewed by psychiatric social workers, physicians and counselors. The reason for the occasion for acute alcoholism should be ascertained. After all tests and interviews, the patient should be counselled and advised. Social workers should help carry out the program planned for the individual.

Approve . . . . . 64 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 22 percent
Can't decide . . . . . 15 percent

B. All heavy drinkers should be considered to be persons afflicted with a chronic disease, not persons given to breaking the law. A program for chronic alcoholics would emphasize treatment and rehabilitation rather than punishment. A welfare unit should be operated in conjunction with the courts before which drunks are brought for sentencing.

Approve . . . . . 86 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 6 percent
Can't decide . . . . . 9 percent

C. Chronic alcoholics who are not also incorrigible should be sent (with the consent of the man) to a retraining center, instead of being sentenced to a jail term for drunkenness or disorderly conduct. This center would employ the most modern medical, psychiatric, and sociological techniques in attempting to initiate rehabilitation. This could be a single, municipally-operated center or could be a special facility of several hospitals.

Approve . . . . . 91 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 3 percent
Can't decide . . . . . 7 percent

D. Alcoholics who are discharged from a retraining center should be required to spend several weeks on a "halfway-house" or center where they can be employed at useful jobs and trained by experts in vocational rehabilitation. They have no access to alcohol on the premises but would have access to a normal community. This program is one of vocational and occupational rehabilitation and of reinforcing the retraining center's work. Needed psychiatric, counselling, or other assistance could be continued in this phase. Assistance is given in locating a job upon "graduation."

| | |
|---|---|
| Approve | 83 percent |
| Disapprove | 5 percent |
| Can't decide | 7 percent |

E. Chronic alcoholics who will never be self-supporting again because of age or irreparable physical and mental deterioration should be institutionalized.

| | |
|---|---|
| Approve | 75 percent |
| Disapprove | 11 percent |
| Can't decide | 14 percent |

F. The city should have an integrated program of Health Information for citizens, one part of which would inform citizens about alcoholism, its dangers, and procedures for cure. This information should be a part of the formal training of all junior and senior high school students. It should be available without charge for adult education in factories or organizations desiring to inform their employees or members.

| | |
|---|---|
| Approve | 87 percent |
| Disapprove | 3 percent |
| Can't decide | 11 percent |

## III. ORGANIZATION OF EFFORTS TO ACCOMPLISH A REHABILITATION PROGRAM

It lies outside the scope of this research program to attempt to make detailed recommendations concerning how the city of Chicago, or any other city, should organize its resources to carry out a program of rehabilitation and provide needed assistance to homeless men. However, just as a "trial balloon" and to stimulate the resource persons to discuss the topic, the following three questions were inserted in the interview.

A. It has been proposed that a Bureau for Homeless and Transient Men should be established and operated by the city. Its possible functions are those we've just been discussing (rehabilitation of

alcoholics, programs of assistance to elderly men, working men, etc.). Do you approve of the establishment of a Bureau for Homeless and Transient Men and its operation by the city?

Approve . . . . . 58 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 21 percent
Can't decide . . . . . 14 percent
No answer . . . . . 7 percent

B. The program of Alcoholics Anonymous should be made available as a part of the retraining program for those patients who wish to participate.

Approve . . . . . 90 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 2 percent
Can't decide and
no answer . . . . 8 percent

C. The work facilities of the Salvation Army and other charitable organizations should be utilized as a part of the re-training program.

Approve . . . . . 88 percent
Disapprove . . . . . 5 percent
Can't decide and
no answer . . . . 7 percent

Thus about 9 persons out of 10 voted to continue the work of Alcoholics Anonymous, Salvation Army, and other private charitable organizations as a part of a program. A few warned that no man should be forced to accept service from religious organizations against his will. When confronted with item A, the establishment of a central Bureau to co-ordinate the activities of both public and private agencies, a majority favored the idea. Yet this item failed to gain the almost overwhelming support that the other items had obtained. One-fifth of the respondents disapproved, although only 7 percent disapproved strongly. An additional one-fifth either said they did not know or failed to respond to the question at all. Many workers in private agencies feared that if a Bureau were established by the city, it would be operated ineffectively because it might be staffed on the basis of political patronage rather than on professional competence.

## IV. RECOMMENDATIONS CONCERNING TREATMENT OF ALCOHOLICS

Section II, above, was a tabulation of responses to a specified program for treatment of chronic alcoholics, submitted to the resource persons for their critical reaction of approval or disapproval and comment. Earlier in the interview they had been asked the open-ended question, "Do you think anything might be done to help the homeless

men who cannot control their drinking? What can be done?" The interviewers made an especially conscientious effort to "probe" this area by encouraging the resource persons to talk spontaneously concerning what they considered to be a "really adequate" or "ideal" program to help rehabilitate chronic alcoholics. The comments received have been summarized in a series of points, listed below, which seem to represent a core of essential agreement.

Point 1. — Chronic alcoholism is a symptom of personality disturbance, of incomplete socialization, or of personal disorganization resulting from unfavorable social experiences. Only rarely is it simply a pastime, a pleasure, or simply a carefree form of hedonistic recreation.

Point 2. — Little can be done to help an alcoholic control his drinking until he admits he is unable to control it, wants help, is willing to accept help, and is motivated to carry out a regimen of therapy. Some experts believe in waiting until a man has reached this point through "going down to the very bottom of the gutter," while others believe a man can be hastened to this point through counseling.

Point 3. — Rehabilitation of Skid Row alcoholics is made serious and different from other forms of treatment for alcoholism because the man has no family to assist and there is no community setting that supports him. In fact, the Skid Row environment is antagonistic to efforts to stop drinking. In other ways, Skid Row alcoholics may be easier to rehabilitate than other alcoholics because their situation has become so desperate that they realize they need help and are more ready to accept it.

Point 4. — One of the first steps in rehabilitation is to feed and clothe the man, get him living in clean surroundings, and begin restoration of physical health.

Point 5. — The men respond more quickly and more favorably to a family-like or a men's-club-like situation than to a hospital or an institutional atmosphere. The feeling that he has become an adopted member, upon whom respect, affection, friendship, and genuine interest are bestowed, is an essential part of the process of helping him to realize he can "come back" and to resolve to try.

Point 6. — The man must feel a strong belief that he will be able to stop drinking, with help. He must realize that this will require strong effort on his part and that it will not be an easy task. This belief in his own ability often is strengthened by a religious conversion in which he feels he is receiving direct Divine assistance. This belief may also be strengthened by the testimonials of ex-alcoholics (either in a religious or nonreligious context), who are concrete and living proof that "it can be done." Counseling may also assist in establishing this attitude of hope, expectation, and determination to try.

Point 7. — The man must be insulated from Skid Row, either by being physically transported to a different place entirely or by being confined, with his permission, to a building where he sees and meets only counselors and fellow patients, and where he does not see his old drinking cronies.

Point 8. — Treatment for alcoholism consists of helping a man become a teetotaler. There is no such thing as assisting a heavy drinker to "cut down" on his drinking; he can be helped only to stop drinking altogether.

Point 9. — Experts disagree upon the exact formulae or ingredients that should be used in a program of treatment. The programs that have been most successful seem to agree on the following points:

a. Formal psychoanalysis is prolonged, costly, and much less effective in curing alcoholism than for many other forms of personality disturbance. It is impractical to design a program that makes extensive use of individual psychiatric care. Time, money, and personnel required would be prohibitively large, and the results disappointing.

b. It is also widely agreed that men can be stopped from drinking without removing or fully relieving all of the psychological tensions they have. Many can be taught to "live with their limitations," at least to the extent of holding a job and becoming self-supporting and independent of public charity.

c. A part of the compulsion of drinking seems to be addiction, or quasi-addiction, of the same type that makes it difficult for people to stop smoking, stop over-eating, etc. It is incorrect to attribute to tension and maladjustment all of the intensity of drinking behavior. Once the addictive pattern has been interrupted for a sufficiently long time, there is a chance of attempting to deal with the maladjustment sufficiently to permit the man to reexamine and reevaluate his personal problems and, with group therapy and counseling, to learn to accept or otherwise handle his limitations.

d. The point of items b and c seemingly is the psychological basis for the rather numerous cures that are claimed — and demonstrated — by various groups who have worked with these men. A sufficiently large number of men have been cured, without psychiatric or other intensive individual assistance, to make it clear that a "short-cut" is possible, even though it may represent only partial rehabilitation, as viewed by psychiatrists. It is often said that such rehabilitated men are "dry drunks," in that they manifest their tensions in other, though perhaps less debilitating, ways.

e. Alcoholics Anonymous is widely acclaimed as being one of the programs that have been most successful in helping men to stop drinking. Perhaps their program can be made even more effective with the Skid Row alcoholic by supplementing it with measures to take account of the family-less status of the man and the hostile environment in which he is living while trying to make his comeback.

f. Psychiatrists and others also agree that religious experience, religious counseling, often is an important and necessary ingredient. Almost 100 percent of the Skid Row alcoholics believe in God and have had religious training. For many, this is a promising avenue through which they can be helped.

g. However, it has also been generally observed that many chronic alcoholics are violently opposed to the program of rehabilitation offered by missions, and either refuse to volunteer or else do not participate wholeheartedly if they do enter a program. Secular programs are needed to supplement the activities of the religious organizations. At the present time very few facilities of this kind are available to Skid Row men.

h. Counseling and frequent discussion with trained and experienced workers who have insight into the experience the man is having as he attempts to retrain himself are essential parts of the program.

i. Group therapy, the alcoholic participating as one of a group of men all undergoing treatment at once and all sharing their common problem, appears to be an important reinforcing device.

j. Drugs may be used to deter some men from drinking, and may help break through the addictive phase, but as yet medication alone has not been able to motivate prolonged abstention or remove the factors that lead to resumption of drinking.

k. The danger of backsliding is very great. It is at peak intensity shortly after formal therapy has been completed and the man is again on his own. At this stage, he badly needs psychological support and a semi-sheltered environment. The "half-way house," a residential arrangement where men can live in comparative freedom and still have available to them programs of counseling and activity, is generally thought to be a good bridge over which the man can cross back into normal society.

Point 10. — If a man is to stay well, he must be economically independent of Skid Row. If poverty drives him back there, he will become an alcoholic again. Oddly enough, a man can survive on Skid Row as an alcoholic although he could starve as a teetotaler. Hence, the program must include aid getting and maintaining steady employment for these men. This may require vocational rehabilitation or even sheltered em-

ployment opportunities for those who are physically handicapped.

Point 11. — Much drinking activity is oriented toward recreational and social interests, even though it may be created by psychological tensions. Rehabilitation must also include the substitution of non-alcoholic recreation for the habits of the tavern, and retraining to make use of such programs.

Point 12. — One of the greatest difficulties of rehabilitating the Skid Row alcoholic is to establish rapport with him. He cannot be expected to keep appointments, stay in the same hotel, or even maintain interest when he is "on the street" and drinking freely. Several experts believe that the critical time to offer help is while he is in prison, at a prison farm, or when he is dismissed from these places. Under these circumstances, being sober and in possession of his faculties, he may be motivated to attempt rehabilitation. Such experts believe that Chicago and other cities are missing a major opportunity by not working with the men while they are in prison, and by not having a program of rehabilitation for those who wish it when they come out of prison.

Point 13. — Some programs emphasize education and retraining. They try to teach the basic facts of alcoholism, some of the principles of elementary psychology and psychiatry, and thereby to stimulate self-analysis by the men. This is a major aspect of the well-known "Bridge House" program of New York City. The men undergoing treatment are made to feel like students rather than like patients.

Some of the programs now being tried suggest that the task is far from a hopeless one, and that continued experimentation probably will provide a combination of measures that will yield a comparatively high success rate, that will not be prohibitively expensive, and that will develop a reputation such that a high proportion of chronic alcoholics will seek help through it.

Suggestions by resource persons:

Following is a selection of the free responses made by the resource persons as they talked about what might be done to rehabilitate chronic alcoholics on Skid Row. It is intended that every point of view be represented by at least one quotation. Most of these comments were submitted by intensely interested persons who have had prolonged first-hand contact with Skid Row alcoholics, and show a mixture of "book-learning" with the hard facts of reality. They are presented here to illustrate the 13 points above, supplement the program approved by the resource persons as a whole, and also to report views contradictory to them.

It depends on the individual, whether he wants to control his drinking. If he has a desire to quit drinking, medical treatment, perhaps some

psychiatric treatment (the psychiatrists have so far not been very successful treating alcoholics), is indicated. Also organizations like AA, Portal House, clinics for alcoholism, as well as state hospitals could help the man in his desire to control drinking.

Much can be done to help the man, provided he has come to the point where he really wants help. But he cannot be helped to become a "controlled drinker"; he can only be helped to become an abstainer.

The first requirement of any alcoholism program is a firm policy which delineates for the client or patient that he is responsible for his recovery. All treatment is predicated on his effort, that the rehabilitation people are there to help him to help himself, not to perpetuate the doing of things for him.

He has to be removed from Skid Row before the rut becomes a grave. This means more than a week in the alcoholic ward; it means a new way of life, removal from old friends and haunts. It means reeducation, a long enough period of time to prove that he can live without alcohol. Some can, some can't.

I don't know that there ever will be a simple solution, but I think the most constructive step on a group basis is the setting up of an alcoholic farm, where shelter, controlled diet, controlled activities, etc., will give these men the props to lean on. A strong internal group program of activity and individual guidance would provide some of the controls these men are unable to put on themselves. To be effective, I should think a well-planned, well-supervised program is necessary, coupled with legal protections, such as commitment, parole privileges, etc.

Chicago has a farm that could be used to rehabilitate 500 or 600 men. It is now used simply as an overflow of the House of Correction. With only a small budget and a modest program that did not "try to do everything for everybody" this place could be used to get a lot of men off Skid Row permanently.

You must find out what lies behind his drinking. There may be almost innumerable underlying problems. These may be found only by psychiatric examination; then do something about the problem. They need more wholesome environment, more wholesome associates, with recreation, leisure time activities.

The environment should be changed. They should be taken away from Skid Row. They should be given understanding and competent psychiatric and physical help. It is important that they be made to feel that they have a contribution to make to society. They should be helped to get away from a feeling of complete rejection.

You must confine them for treatment, and for a long period of time. You cannot treat a person until he is willing to accept this confinement. (Psychiatrist.)

When a chronic alcoholic is drinking, the only place for him is a jail or other custodial retention. Enforced abstinence may be the only way to cause an alcoholic to be able to do a little introspection regarding his problem. His prognosis will be much better if his psychological and physiological condition is near normal. The purpose of the "Iron Cure" is not to punish, but to enforce sobriety long enough for him to take stock of himself and his situation and perhaps resolve to do more for himself.

I have noticed that when these men go to jail for a good stretch, 15 or 20 days, they act like strangers to Skid Row for a while when they first get back. It's as if they got a chance to see how bad it really is. And they don't drink. Then after several days they fall in again. I think that first 10 or 15 days out of jail is the time to work with them. If they could come out of jail into another environment, I think they would make good subjects for cure, because at that time they seem to want to be different and even try to be different, but with nobody to help them or show them how. When we just keep them overnight we are not doing anything for them. His first thought and first desire is to get something to drink when he gets out of here. You can't even speak to him about himself when he's got the shakes. You take this same fellow when he's been dried out and has had some food in him after he's been in jail, his chances of seeing things differently are a lot better. I think this could be an entry point for helping them. (Member of a metropolitan police force.)

I feel pessimistic about the outcome for alcoholics under psychiatric treatment. The patient has to have insight that he has a problem; then he has to want to do something about it. You would have to put them someplace where they can't get out until they can stand on their own feet. Many would never come out. It would be like patients in a state hospital. It would be the same as treating an alcoholic in a private sanitarium and would require prolonged psychological treatment. So many people who are not versed in the problem think you can help them with brief talks. It is hard to awaken a real honest desire on the part of the man to solve his personality problems, and when there's organic damage done, often your hands are tied — you can't help. (Psychiatrist.)

After a fellow is here for a while, I ask him if he goes to church, and we try to get him back into the practice of his religion. If he gets to going to churches, he'll meet people who are different from the man on the "street." These men need to get to the point of knowing others and

being able to carry on conversations with them... I try to build up their spiritual life. Doing so has kept some men sober and others not. If the men can keep a hold on whatever their religion was, in most cases I find it helps them.... When they're making an effort to be sober, decent housing and food and perhaps clothing should be provided for them until they get their pay. If they could live in half-way decent surroundings while they're working, maybe they'd stay sober a little longer in between drunks. If it was possible for the men to develop a whole new outlook on life, that would be fine, but I don't know how that can be done. The little I've read about psychiatric treatment for fellows on Skid Row seems to indicate that treatment is unsuccessful.

A program of hospitalization, Antabuse therapy, Thorazine therapy, and group therapy carried out simultaneously with the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation would probably enable a sufficient number of men to be rehabilitated to justify the cost.

Get the men to AA groups and help get control of their drinking. Get them out of the district. Find the cause of each man's addiction — send him to a psychiatrist if emotionally disturbed. Follow up with social and psychiatric work. Many things must be used — work, rehabilitation. Hypnosis has even worked. Best success has been with AA programs. The men cure themselves by trying to help somebody else. I think AA has not advertised its services and program enough.

To begin with, they are hungry, dirty, and without a place to stay. So you feed, clothe, and provide them with a clean bed with a group of men of their own kind who are also undergoing treatment. Get them well physically — many have serious diseases. After that, you start on the drinking. I personally believe religion is the answer — a faith in God gives them faith in themselves. But lots of them don't want religion. I think you have to have a psychologist help those who don't want religion. A half-way house would work wonders to help keep them going right.

First of all, you have to convince the person that he can come back; that he can be helped. It is my belief that this requires a definite religious experience. With a religious conviction, he develops a faith in the possibility of his changing, and he gets ahold of something above himself. I have seen this miracle work many times. I do not think it can be done by pure casework and psychiatric and medical care. Those are helpful and needful, but someplace, somewhere, the alcoholic man must put his dependence in God before he can be relieved of his drinking.

We believe that if a man is converted and really accepts Christ, he is delivered of his problem of alcoholism completely and instantly. The next day he is a new man. However, to help him keep his conversion,

he needs a good sound basis of religious training. It takes almost six months or a year of living in a sheltered existence, such as a mission or a farm that is church-oriented, to accomplish this.

I believe there is considerable value in holding to the idea that alcoholism is also related to character defects and to the moral code. Sanctions, both religious and legal, should not be discarded. The help of religious organizations should be elicited. (Psychiatrist.)

I have long advocated that chronic alcoholics must be handled in a way similar to that in which drug addicts are handled. Centers must be established whereby the initial referral can be directed and each case can then be studied while the subject is in detention or in a workhouse; and after all facts are judged, a man may be committed either for treatment or to an institution permanently.

The alcoholic needs to live in a family situation. He needs genuine love. It is a natural human desire to have somebody care for you. The present alcoholism institutions do not help the people. When they get out, these people get drunk again, and there is nobody to care about them. These men have a fear of being rejected. Their feeling of respectability, of being accepted, must be restored.

A rehabilitation center should be a small place — a house where men who are interested in their problems could come and be rehabilitated. It would provide communal living, a family life in reality, with someone working continuously with the men — counseling them and giving spiritual help. It would be a "jumping-off place" to normal living and working. Workers should be trained in the problems of alcoholism — psychiatrists or psychiatric social workers. Also employment counselors who could help employers to understand problems of alcoholics would be desirable. These counselors could help create acceptance on the part of employers of men who are known alcoholics. The problem is to get to the root of the insecurity of each man and to give him the stable equivalent of home life. He should definitely realize that "no monkey business" is allowed — no one can bring liquor into the centers, etc. These houses should be for 15 to 20 men each. Large institutions become quite impersonal.

We should set aside a ward in Cook County Hospital for treatment of alcoholic or mentally disturbed people.

In addition to the "half-way" intramural treatment, the patients should be permitted and helped to find outside employment, thereby helping to pay for their maintenance costs while living at the "half-way" house. This practice provides a more gradual return to full community life.

If a man has a comfortable place to live, the taverns are not so attractive. Economic status is a big factor. Drinking can be controlled medically in some cases. Also, if there were a way to feed the men, they would drink less — as in the old saloon days when free lunches were handed out. It would take thousands of psychoanalysts to untwist the men.

The men could be helped and rehabilitated like the veterans at Hines Hospital. There should be some occupational work, such as wood carving. (There are many programs at Hines.) There should be teachers to keep the minds of the men occupied, helping them to enjoy what they do and learn. Many of the men are just bored. Some can't even read — they go to the reading rooms and hold up a paper to keep warm. Reading classes might well be established for such men. The city should help the men with employment. The private employment agencies take too much — a man gets about half what he is worth. The employment agency checks are also cashed only in certain taverns and hotels. Often the same man runs the employment agency and the hotel or tavern — or his friends do. There is nothing left in the check in the evening — the hotel and tavern get it; the man is back to work the next day and is not free to go where he pleases.

These men need free medical attention, counseling, and referral sources. This is one of our greatest needs. There should be no regard for residence laws.

Training and rehabilitation programs that result in upgrading are needed. Also needed are training for employment in machine operations, vocational counseling, and counseling on problems of social handicaps as well as physical handicaps.

I have noticed that two deterrents among these men are: 1) the knowledge that continued drinking is a real danger to the state of health and 2) the threat of loss of freedom. Many men quit drinking out of fright when the first drinking-induced disability manifests itself.

A lot of the men on Skid Row are veterans. The city of Chicago could do a lot toward cleaning up its Skid Row by working out a cooperative program with the V.A. I believe that as down-and-out ex-servicemen they qualify under the V.A. program. If they do not, then the Federal Government should be petitioned to include treatment for chronic alcoholism as a part of its veterans' program.

By far the easiest thing would be to try to prevent alcoholism from happening. Once a man has become a chronic alcoholic, it is a very costly process to rehabilitate him. Probably the simplest thing would be to spend the time and money it takes to get the man in a position to

hold a job (and it would have to be on a very unskilled level) and not to try to make up for all of his social inadequacies. From a social standpoint, the "cure" lies in prevention, which must start in the home and in the schools. . . Educationally, mentally, and psychologically these men are the waste material of a free capitalistic system. I think the government should take the capital out of the castoff. A lot was said against the WPA, but it was a saver in many ways during that period when our economic system cast off millions. I'd like to see a government program, financed on a matched-fund basis, to take care of all people who are at the bottom of the social and economic and skills ladder. It would not be a handout program, just a nonprofit program helping the men to do the very best they can with what they have and helping them climb higher if they can do so.

Stricter enforcement and heavier sentences imposed at the stage of heavy drinking could possibly prevent some heavy drinkers from becoming alcoholics. Some institutionalization at this stage could prevent total institutionalization at the stage of chronic alcoholism.

I think one important need is the raising of standards in the area. When standards are brought up and comparable to other areas, I believe a lot of this heavy drinking will cease. I don't know why there has to be such a difference in wages paid to men who live on Skid Row and to men who live anywhere else. I don't understand why lodging houses on Skid Row can continue to operate under conditions that have been outlawed everywhere else in the city. The lodging houses should be modernized and brought up to standards, or else torn down. Everyone just says, "Well, it's Madison Street," and lets it go at that. Also, the area is too concentrated. The time is over when it has to be a labor market for workers. People can be procured from all over the city — and are being.

Skid Row is living in the past, and much of the thinking that is being done about "improving Skid Row" is living in the past also. In addition, the agencies that send men to the area should think what they are doing, and seriously consider sending them to other places or making other arrangements. I think also that the people who are responsible for bringing men to Skid Row and making a profit on them should be responsible for alleviating the situation. Employers who owe their existence to these men should be responsible. Too many people are making a living out of this area and are disinterested in the fact that they are contributing to the problem.

I do not know why the railroads have to give their checks out in Chicago. The men live and work hundreds of miles out of Chicago. They might get acquainted with different people in the small towns. They might get jobs out there instead of being shipped back here just for the

paycheck. The railroads take them 200 or 300 miles away, and then bring them back and give them a voucher. They wait two or three days for their checks, and in the meantime they buy drinks on credit at the taverns. By the time their checks come, they have little left. All of the men's friends know, too, that they have been working and that a check is coming. There is a spree before the check arrives, and what is left is jackrolled easily as the men are usually dead drunk by the time they get their checks.

The evils of the liquor traffic must be controlled. The liquor interests have too much power in politics, both in the state and locally.

I think the economic props should be kicked out from under the whole situation. Take the profit out of everything concerning these poor wretches — the cheap labor market and the other forms of economic duress that exist.

## V. RECOMMENDATIONS TO ASSIST HOMELESS MEN WHO ARE NOT ALCOHOLICS

The resource persons were also asked to outline what action the city, state and federal governments should take to rehabilitate each of the other groups of homeless men who are not necessarily alcoholics. The following comments have been selected as being representative of the information given.

### A. Elderly or Physically Disabled Men

The County Department of Welfare should screen these people individually, diagnose them, and then refer them to hospitals, nursing homes, and homes for the aged.

There should be city-wide planning for older people, with well supervised programs for them. The city should look out for the O.A.A. pensioners — seeing that they have adequate housing and food. Now the younger men jackroll the old ones and push them around.

Provide adequate pensions, so a man can choose freely where to live.

A living standard that meets a minimum adequate budget should be provided.

Provide adequate and decent housing in the same homeless men area, with supervision and attention to the hygiene and health needs of the homeless men. Subsidized cafeterias where wholesome, cheap meals may be obtained in a cheerful atmosphere are needed.

Lodges or centers should be built and supervised properly by government, at a cost within the reach of the homeless men's income.

I would recommend a small unit of supervised shelter where each man has his own quarters and where he is required to meet definite rulings of the house for the comfort of all (a situation where there would be freedom of movement — not an institutional setting). It would be a homelike atmosphere. Wherever possible, the man or his family should pay. If you had a free program with good care, lots of people — especially the suburban set — would be only too happy to "load papa off" onto the city or federal government. Those who are ill or physically handicapped should be given special residences as necessary. Many of these men must be handled with strict discipline, because they are nonconformists.

A home for the men, not too far from the city, with a garden and field would be desirable. The men could work a little, but not overwork.

There is a great need for better homes; and these should be homes, not large institutions. They should be smaller homes than the county poorhouse — which is nothing more than a prison. Social Security laws for the aged should be improved, and provisions should be made for the handicapped.

For selected aged homeless, a foster home placement similar to that for children should be provided with careful screening of both home and aged persons. Follow-up supervision and opportunity to change, cancel, or reassign placements should be part of the program.

These men need a home with therapy. Hobby centers. People trained to help make living more bearable, more interesting. Occupational therapy.

There should be facilities for medical care of chronic ailments. Most facilities for public use in this area are badly overloaded with long waiting lists. The living facilities for these old persons should not be isolated out in the country away from everything.

More adequate recreation, more adequate social life, rehabilitation and treatment for their disabilities are needed.

Senior Centers are ideal; these men should have one.

Employ them. Elderly men in good health make the best employees. The city should be getting employers together, and put the problem up to them. We have never got down to realities on this problem. Employment centers should sort and classify the older men so that they can send out the right man to fit the particular job — free employment service for older men. At the present time, employment service does

not give these men special attention.

They need a real plan for helping place the men in jobs. But the city is overcome by unions, and even if somebody did devise a program for hiring older workers, the unions would kill it.

Programs for convincing employers that the older worker is valuable, reliable, punctual, safe, skilled. We need a "Hire the handicapped" program.

Get industries opened up to these kinds of men. In most places as soon as you walk in disabled or over 40 they won't hire you.

Sheltered work shops where these individuals could apply their efforts toward partial or complete support.

Remove residence laws for these men.

### B. Semi-settled or Settled Workingmen

This kind of man is really a problem. If he stays on Skid Row it is for some reason. He can make enough to get a better place to stay, to go to ball games and shows and live like anybody else. If he is really a good worker he should be able to take care of his own problems and won't stay on Skid Row long.

There should be better places for obtaining employment and places for a man to stay until he gets a job or a better job. Try to eliminate the exploitation that is going on now in the slave markets. Now, a man gets $1.00 an hour and the employment agency gets $.50 to $.75 an hour out of the employer. The labor offices should be investigated by the government, and a better employment system established. Private employment offices do not have fair hiring policies and take too much away from the men.

Make the labor offices more efficient. The labor offices are so inefficient that the employers hire the men directly off the street first. Also, the employers are not fair. They ask for 50 workers and only need five, so they can choose.

There should be a continuous channeling-off of the ones that want to change. You can't do too much with people who don't want to take the first step. You must have a set-up where it is repeatedly brought to the attention of these men that they don't have to live like this, that simply by really wanting and asking for help they can get it. Lots of men on Skid Row have wrong ideas about the various programs already available.

Before we make substantial investments in treatment or training, there must be careful screening to see if response to treatment is probable.

The objective here would be to make them better workers — to increase earning capacity and to help get them back into normal society.

More adequate vocational guidance and training programs that would permit upgrading and placement according to their skills.

I don't think it is necessary to do anything for those who are able. If they are not able, we should help them... We should let those who are able work it out for themselves. I hope we are not going to try to help everybody on the street. I believe if they are able to take care of themselves, but live here just because it is cheap, they can take care of themselves after conditions are improved. Many men on Skid Row do not need help.

Clear out the bad elements and you have taken care of the good residents.

The area should be cleaned up with the establishment of low-cost room rents on a similar basis as the housing authority.

### C. Migratory Workers

We should get away from this idea of having a period of residence before welfare can help. We treat people like they were from another country instead of another state.

It would be good if there were a very efficient and organized labor clearing house so that they don't have to wait around to determine if there are any jobs they can do.... The present Illinois State Employment services are terribly inadequate. They make no attempt to see if the men can do some other kind of job than the kind they're looking for. But they're understaffed and they either do not or cannot find the time.

Most of these men, I think, have limited mental ability. They have worked out successfully in supervised work programs, such as in workhouses where they are often sent. In my experience, they enjoy the company of other men and are satisfied with this type of living. I believe that projects similar to CCC camps would meet with much success if established, fitting the program to the caliber of men.

The city should provide housing where they could stay until they are at least semi-settled. Then they can move out. Facilities should be available for a period of at least a month.

Keep them working. Help them get a job.

It would help to have a federal program which could utilize men in a vast reforestation program, somewhat along the lines of the CCC camps.

There is a need for financial aid to carry the men until the first paycheck. There is also a matter of clean housing. At present, the cost the men pay is out of proportion. There should be more hostels or shelters — more than one center where clean, warm accommodations are provided. Payments by men can perhaps be made later. Also, they should pay reasonable rates.

There should be better education as to job opportunities and job situations. The farm workers come to the city in winter because they have no place else to go. They should know about the winters here and the cost of living.

Help them find jobs, but keep them from stopping too long. Let them come in and look for jobs, but if there is nothing here for them, have them move on someplace else where there is a chance.

How are you going to hold that kind of man down unless you put him behind bars? And the country needs migratory workers. If we didn't have them, you wouldn't have your berry harvest, etc. — at least not as cheap as you do now. The government could see that the migratory workers have adequate quarters and adequate pay. California has done that. (Social caseworker in large municipal welfare department.)

### D. Transient Bums

Give them a hot-foot. We should not make a set-up in Chicago that will attract transient bums. They need firm handling. It is a job for the police to say, "Look, Buster, go someplace else." You are talking about a person who does not want to work — a nuisance. Most of them can not be rehabilitated. We must make them accept work — do something useful. It cannot be denied, they manage to get onto relief or other charity, despite all efforts to remove them or keep them out.

You're talking about the floater. The social caseworker's attitude toward these men is that they are hopeless, but I think that's changing. Something should be done to stop these men from roaming the country. But how can we do it without inviting a lot of floaters from other communities to come here? We need to understand these men better before we can try to help them. Meanwhile, the church organizations do what they can to show an interest in them and try to help them rethink their whole problem and change their outlook.

My policy is simply to refuse any kind of assistance if a person is able

to work. Let them starve or leech off someone else until they find it's easier to go to work. There's a point at which you simply have to cut off assistance in order to help them. But this is not realistic. Most bums have mental problems, and you may be asking the impossible to ask them to go out and get a job. They may be completely incapable of facing the responsibilities of holding a job. One possibility is simply to put these people to work for the city and to use them as the government did in the various programs in the '30's. City welfare right now is making every able-bodied man work for his minimum subsistence from the city — 15 hours a month. When they are in jail, find out what kind of work they can do and give them some training.

The old system of penalizing them for being bums under vagrancy laws is the only thing that can be done. If there is a screening procedure, the mentally ill would be separated and given treatment as needed. The others could be given the workhouse treatment, until they agree to become self-supporting.

Bums are not all alike, but are individuals, and individual help would benefit some.

Work camps similar to CCC of former years should be established.

In my experience, if there were really something for them to do the men would not bum anymore. I think a program of helping them get jobs they can do would probably take care of them.

### E. Resident Bums

There are not many of these. There are more drones in the Community Chest than on all of Skid Row.

There should be a toughening of official attitude — "No work, no eat!" Police action should be stiffer. There should be an agency to educate the public on why not to give 5 or 10 cent gifts to panhandlers.

Someone who understands people should be put in charge of trying to help these people and make them self-supporting. Perhaps farms should be established to help them work out their problems. The present program of maltreating them as if they were not human beings should not be permitted.

### F. Men Incapable of Being Rehabilitated

A separate question concerning this group of men was asked: "What do you think the city, state, and federal governments should do for those men who can't be rehabilitated?" Here are the comments received:

I don't like to admit that there's anybody that can't be rehabilitated somehow. On a practical level, I see no alternative to simply supporting them as we do all the other mentally ill people that we have. They should be supported somehow in a state-operated institution. Since we are collecting people, the local taxpayer should not be responsible for their support. There should be a possibility of organizing an institution that would be self-contained. The food could be raised by the people who are there. The basic necessities could be provided through a basic intramural program. And if they have families, they should be forced to help.

They should be like any other citizen. They should be handled like any other sick person. You're talking about a man who is drinking so much he's too far deteriorated and can't be helped. If he's sick, send him to a hospital; if it's mental, send him to an institution. I don't think there is any particular problem about it.

Most men resent institutional life because it deprives them of personal liberties. Except in extreme cases of deterioration it would seem better to offer such services on a voluntary basis.

Often these people can be taken care of in a foster home. They should be cared for in the community outside institutions, if possible.

I believe the men who can't be rehabilitated could be confined in an institution within the city limits and have freedom to roam, commensurate with the individual's responsibility to keep out of trouble and return to the institution. Some have a "cocktail hour." Receiving alcoholic beverages at the institution makes it less compelling for the inmate to escape confinement and overindulge.

Allow them to take care of themselves (with welfare help) as long as they are able, then provide sheltered care.

They should be isolated in a semi-disciplined institution where some gainful work would be provided for them.

The city should have a work farm — a real work farm where a fellow can see that he's accomplishing something. And while these men are there they should be treated like human beings and they should be fed three meals a day.

Have a colony for them. Let them work. They can do a lot of useful work. It would be like any other state institution. You'd provide them with clothes, with room and board. But people who have gone that far have to be taken care of as children. But even some of those Skid Row people would prefer their liberty under bad conditions to such a life. (Psychiatrist.)

Society has to take care of them by virtue of their being human beings. Give them at least food and lodging and let them live like human beings.

If this is strictly a problem of chronic alcoholism — those who are physically and mentally ill — there is no way except to place them in a public institution (either a rest home or a state hospital). Certainly the community is not doing the right thing by leaving these men out on the street where they can't take care of themselves. This is a welfare job. If a man can't get along — if he is too elderly or senile — it seems to me the laws are there to take care of it; we are just not working hard enough at it.

For those who cannot be rehabilitated into regular employment and wholesome living there should be increased facilities for both sheltered employment and wholesome living arrangements. Public shelter with adequate medical facilities, a hospital, and creative leisure time activities, should be made available to those who cannot pass the screening test, and to those who are unable to work, even in a sheltered shop.

Their exploitation should be prevented. Society is responsible for them; society can't treat them like animals and should not let others profit by them.

*Chapter 23*

## *CONCLUSION: SKID ROW CAN BE ELIMINATED: VIEWS OF THE RESEARCH DIRECTOR*

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Note: This chapter was submitted to the city of Chicago in March of 1959. It is reproduced here not because it is regarded as the best solution, but to help stimulate further discussion and planning in cities throughout the nation. Although it was written with special reference to Chicago, it might be taken as the broad outline for a program in any city with a Skid Row problem.

This chapter is really an addendum to the research report. It sets forth ideas for a program to eliminate Skid Row, ideas which evolved in the mind of the director of the research and his associates as the study progressed.

In formulating and presenting these ideas, the research director is not adhering to the strict research role which he prescribed for himself and his associates in the collection and analysis of the factual data. He here ceases to be concerned only with what is and why, and asks himself and his associates what, in their judgment, can and ought to be done about what is. The ideas do not constitute, therefore, in any sense, an official set of recommendations.

It has been shown that the population of a Skid Row is highly complex, with certain segments that do not pose serious problems. Nevertheless, its peculiar character lies in the fact that it does contain persons characterized as "problem cases" in relatively high proportion. The various types of problem cases have been enumerated and described in the research report. They are:

a. The bachelor laborer, operative, or semi-skilled worker who either is afraid of or else dislikes normal neighborhood and family life, and who prefers hotel life instead
b. The familyless elderly person with limited income
c. The indigent, often elderly, person on Public Assistance
d. The unskilled, familyless, physically disabled worker
e. The familyless chronic alcoholic
f. The familyless unemployables — the "dregs" of the labor market
g. The familyless idle or shiftless person who does not want steady work

h. The severely neurotic or marginally psychotic individual who has fled from normal social life and is "hiding out" to escape detection and possible institutionalization

The problem, then, of getting rid of Skid Row is one of controlling the circumstances in society which produce such persons, of reducing their number through effective rehabilitation procedures, and of providing acceptable institutional arrangements for taking care of cases that cannot be prevented or rehabilitated. This states the problem in basic, long-range terms. Our research suggests, however, that there are intermediate steps which, if taken, would eliminate Chicago's Skid Row within five years. This chapter tries to map out a series of steps for doing this.

## SKID ROW AS AN ECONOMIC LIABILITY

Before any such intermediate steps are suggested, it should be pointed out that this research, together with other well-authenticated facts, has completely undermined one common rationalization for the continued existence of Skid Row — that it is an important economic asset to the community. It has been said that Skid Row is a pool of laborers readily available on a day-to-day basis and willing to work on menial jobs at low pay. The need for such a labor pool may have been substantial and important at one time, but nowadays Skid Row's economic functions are comparatively minor and certainly not essential. It is true that one can scarcely eat in a famous-name restaurant in Chicago's Loop without eating vegetables cleaned and pared by a Skid Row kitchen-hand served on dishes washed by another Skid Row kitchen-hand. But it is also true that the entire Skid Row labor force could disappear from the economic scene and scarcely be missed.

Chicago, and every other major city, now has a surplus of unskilled, able-bodied young males who are unemployed and seeking work. Many are Negro and white migrants from the South and from Puerto Rico. Others are Chicago-born boys who dropped out of school because they were restless. Labor shortages are all at the middle and upper levels of the occupational ladder, not at the bottom. Automation in industry, transportation, and warehousing are shrinking the need for casual labor. The spot job employment agencies at the present time could fill the vacancies or job contracts with young migrant workers without using any of the men from Skid Row. Likewise, many railroads have closed their Skid Row hiring offices; they have found that Skid Row gandies are inferior workers and involve more trouble than a "home guard" hired from small towns along the lines to be maintained. Much of railroad maintenance now is done by machines. The activities of the State Casual Labor Office and the employment-getting activities of missions and welfare organizations are aimed at obtaining preferential hiring for

homeless men and hence are a form of sheltered employment.

Some tavern, hotel, and restaurant owners claim that Skid Row brings a large volume of business to Chicago in the form of the railroad and other employment payrolls. Even if this were true, the cost to Chicago of maintaining Skid Row and of providing police, fire, and housing inspection and other municipal services far exceeds the actual revenue received in taxes from Skid Row establishments. The cost is perhaps three to four times the revenue.

Meanwhile, Skid Row is a major barrier to urban renewal. Not only does it tie up square miles of precious land, but it "poisons" a broad surrounding zone for residential renewal. The economic costs in lost opportunities must annually run into many millions of dollars, and are paid by the citizenry at large.

Thus from an economic viewpoint, Skid Row must be regarded as a liability to the community, with no necessary or indispensable economic function. This does not mean that the economic activities of Skid Row are bad or should be abolished; in fact, these economic activities have the effect of making a large percentage of the homeless men minimally self-supporting, thus keeping them from being direct full-time dependents. But it does mean that if Skid Rows were abolished, there would be no strong economic forces that would tend to re-create them, except those economic forces that operate on the fringe of legality and morality. The notion that Skid Rows are economically necessary, or even advantageous, is fallacious.

## MANY FORCES ARE WORKING AGAINST SKID ROW

A second important principle is that, if it were not for a few persisting forces, the assault by several other forces would destroy Skid Row. Among these forces which would tend to eliminate Skid Row are:

a. The rising level of living in the general population, making continued tolerance of the Skid Row situation appear increasingly callous
b. The rising level of education and urbanization of the population, making victims of circumstance, no matter how destitute, discontented and rebellious at having to accept the Skid Row way of life
c. The Social Security system, providing protection to every man upon retirement against having to live on Skid Row
d. The end of the national housing shortage, opening a generous supply of housing that is suitable for upgrading the residences of familyless men
e. Public awareness that slums and substandard housing are unnecessary

f. A changed public attitude toward alcoholism, making it the subject of public health and welfare efforts
g. The gradual humanization of industry, with ruthlessness in hiring and firing of casual employees less frequently the routine way of doing business
h. Last, and perhaps most important of all, the Skid Row is highly vulnerable to change. It has been able to stay alive only because a combination of circumstances fostered it.

All of the persisting forces are now greatly weakened. The Skid Row socio-economic system is falling apart in response to these pressures. Once a critical point is approached, the whole Skid Row pattern will collapse. Skid Rows have now reached this stage where only a little courageous pressure is needed to start this demise. At the present moment, the vacancy rates in Skid Row hotels are so high that proprietors are forced to plead with the city not to take away welfare clients. As the economic props have been kicked out one by one, Skid Row taverns do a much less lively business than before, and an increasing number are closing their doors. Rooming house and hotel proprietors have found they must offer more and better services if they want to keep their clientele. The labor offices now discriminate against Skid Row men. Alcoholics Anonymous and other organizations are making inroads on alcoholism. Police activity is making the area safer from jackrollers.

It is important to recognize that together these forces have had such an impact that even a modest pressure to assist them can now have a substantial effect. In fact, the institution of an alcoholism program that would take the 300-500 worst cases of alcoholism off Skid Row and force them into a treatment program could in and of itself start a chain reaction that would upgrade the area in a remarkable way.

However, a fully successful Skid Row program must contain several elements, requiring inter-agency cooperation and planning.

## ELEMENTS OF A PROGRAM TO ELIMINATE SKID ROWS

Skid Rows in American cities can be abolished without undesirable consequences and at a cost that is not prohibitive. Such an accomplishment, however, will require a considerable change in viewpoint and municipal philosophy with respect to Skid Rows. Specifically, it will be necessary to substitute for the present "containment" policy a positive program of removal, rebuilding, rehabilitation, and prevention. Such a program could be scheduled as a major five-year program. The ultimate savings in municipal expenditures would pay for most of the program. The balance could be financed from new taxes and other revenues derived from converting present Skid Row land to more productive uses.

The major elements of such a program may be listed under twelve headings, as follows (each item is discussed in detail in the following pages):

1. A program for disposing of Skid Row housing which, though not absolutely prohibited by existing municipal building codes, is in reality unsafe, unhealthful, and sociologically undesirable. Such a program should have two phases: Phase I, a phase of immediately "shrinking" Skid Rows; and Phase II, a phase of completely replacing the diminished Skid Row. This will involve providing housing units to serve the needs of the elderly indigent and other erstwhile Skid Row residents on a quite different plane.
2. A program for institutionalizing men who are mentally ill, seriously ill with chronic diseases, or too senile to take care of themselves.
3. A program of minimum adequate care for dependent elderly persons who have no families, and housing for workingmen who are not alcoholics.
4. A program of medical rehabilitation to restore disabled men to the labor force, or to improve their employability and earning capacity. A special group here would be those workingmen who, through congenital defect, accident, or who otherwise are unable to support themselves at a minimally adequate level of living.
5. A program of occupational rehabilitation and training to improve the employability of Skid Row men to help them become self-supporting or to upgrade their earning power.
6. A program of treatment for Skid Row alcoholics, where the persons to be treated are not willing to cooperate voluntarily, or who are willing but who refuse to be helped or fail to be helped by programs operated by Alcoholics Anonymous and missions.
7. A program of sheltered or semi-sheltered employment for men who cannot obtain regular or steady employment in the competition of the open labor market, even though they desire it.
8. A program of rehabilitation and assimilation for ex-convicts who have served their prison terms, and who have no families. Skid Row now collects a considerable number of such men because there is no adequate program for helping them re-establish themselves.
9. A plan for detection and management of men who do not want steady work and who are not handicapped but who merely use the Skid Row welfare facilities to gain a parasitic livelihood.
10. A program for the rehousing and possible socialization of asocial, anti-social, and semi-neurotic persons who prefer to live in isolation.

11. A program to eliminate economic exploitation on Skid Row, and to assure a type of service that would help homeless men to get off Skid Row rather than make sure that they stay there.
12. A program of preventive action, with special emphasis upon dealing with newcomers to Skid Row.

The foregoing program elements are admittedly interrelated and overlapping. But they differ in their foci and in the methods and procedures required for their accomplishment.

Item 1. Renewal of Skid Row Housing: First Year. — A redevelopment program could be launched immediately to dispose of almost two-thirds of the present housing on Skid Row. Not less than 50 percent of all cubicle-type hotels and many seriously substandard and overcrowded old rooming houses could be demolished immediately without any noticeable effect upon other neighborhoods in the city.

The entire South State Street Skid Row, penny arcade, and "honky-tonk" area could be completely razed. Vacancy rates are extremely high in this area. The North Clark Street Skid Row is so small in comparison with the large slum that surrounds it, and in comparison with West Madison Street, that it could be razed at any time, either as a separate action or as a part of a larger clearance program. In addition, every one of the older cubicle-type hotels on West Madison Street that was built or converted before 1915 could be torn down. These hotels, with their narrow stairways, their small, box-like, dreary lobbies, their wooden floors made into tinder by years of oiling and use of oil-base sprays, are beyond salvage as residences. These buildings are in sharp contrast to the larger cubicle-type hotels built or converted in the 1920's, which are of fireproof construction. Most of the older hotels are on second and higher floors above other commercial establishments and have old-fashioned heating systems that are capable of starting fires. No amount of remodeling could convert them into safe or comfortable living quarters. In the event of a fire, the men could only stumble blindly through the narrow passageways which lead by crooked paths to stairways that are not really fire-protected, or to fire escapes located in such a way that exit must be through a window. In general, these are the medium-sized and smaller hotels. In order to "make ends meet," the managers of them tend to hire the fewest and cheapest personnel possible. Clerks are often men from Skid Row who drink on the job and have only a foggy notion of what to do in an emergency. The owners or managers of many of these hotels are interested strictly in immediate profits, and do as little as possible to make their places livable.

In the process of taking the interviews with the sample of Skid Row men, I visited every hotel and made an informal tour of inspection of almost every one, often by simply coming back at a later time and rent-

ing a room, which I sometimes occupied for the night. I am speaking from first-hand experience in claiming that there are no less than fifteen or twenty cubicle-type hotels in Chicago which nobody would regret seeing torn down. The result of razing the most substandard and hazardous structures would be to reduce the number of cubicle hotels to about ten or fifteen larger, newer, more fire-resistant units that are clustered together within a few blocks on West Madison Street, in adjoining streets, or on the very edge of the Loop. Although some of these largest units are not very well operated (from the viewpoint of customer welfare), this situation would be remedied by some of the other items in the program listed below.

Such an action would have the immediate effect of greatly reducing Chicago's Skid Row area, and would concentrate the Skid Row population into fewer units and a much smaller space that could be more easily improved. No housing shortage would result if this action were accompanied by a program of removing all possible public-welfare recipients and elderly pensioners from cubicle hotels. Given the present high vacancy rates in cubicle hotels, the removal of Chicago's subsidy to this business would free whole structures for demolition.

This program should be accompanied by a very rigorous inspection of rooming houses in the Skid Row areas, with condemnation procedures taken against the several places that are nothing but unhealthy holes into which elderly pensioners and outpatients from Cook County Hospital are crowded. Since these rooming houses, too, derive a major share of their income from the city, it should be an easy matter to refuse to certify them for a recipient of public welfare if they have not passed inspection by both the Building Department and the Board of Health. Since the rooming houses provide quarters for only a few men each, and are interspersed among other land uses, the worst of them could be torn down without any external effect.

This action would provide much land for industrial districts, low-cost public housing, and other profitable uses. Since Chicago now has used up most of its vacant land, future economic growth must come from converting wasteful areas such as the sprawling and unnecessarily large Skid Row. This phase could be accomplished unilaterally; it does not require cooperative action with any welfare agency except the Cook County Department of Welfare in rehousing welfare recipients. It is completely "safe" in that no other community in Chicago would be threatened.

Item 1. Renewal of Skid Row Housing: Second to Fifth Years. — Accomplishment of Phase I would dispose entirely of two Skid Rows in Chicago and would reduce the area of the West Madison Street Skid Row by about one-third, without affecting other parts of the city. But it would bring only a moderate improvement in the housing situation of

men who continue to live on Skid Row. A positive program, which would rehouse all Skid Row men or greatly rehabilitate present housing, is called for. This second phase would be more complex and far less autonomous than the first. It would have to be closely integrated with a welfare, health, and rehabilitation program. The types and amounts of housing provided would have to be geared to this program. Some housing units must have facilities for special purposes, in addition to providing residence. In some cases, institutional housing is called for. Thus, the redevelopment of Skid Row forces housing experts to work with other experts, and the success of a program to rid cities of Skid Rows will depend upon how honestly and fully this collaboration is carried out.

A summary of the housing action involved as Phase II is as follows:

a. Housing in low-cost, single rooms for familyless workingmen — those who do not drink, or those who have successfully mastered a drinking problem but who prefer to live outside usual residential areas or in a hotel-like environment. This housing would concentrate on helping men rise to better living conditions.
b. Housing for elderly persons or familyless men, many of whom are unable to support themselves at a minimally adequate level because of disability.
c. Expansion of institutional facilities to include familyless men who are found to be mentally ill or incurably ill from chronic diseases that are highly debilitating.
d. Housing for chronic alcoholics from Skid Row undergoing primary treatment for alcoholism.
e. Housing for alcoholics after the phase of primary treatment is completed; these are sometimes called "halfway houses."
f. Housing for men who are destitute, either because they refuse to participate in other programs, are incorrigible bums, or are temporarily desperate because of emergencies. This might include the conversion of one or more existing cubicle hotels for use as a charitable or low-cost lodginghouse, possibly separately operated by the Cook County Department of Welfare. Actually, the present program of the missions is handling this almost adequately.

As will be made clear in the detailed discussion below, these programs are not all necessarily public housing programs. With proper administration, private welfare organizations and private businessmen can accomplish much of this housing program.

Item 2. Institutionalization of Psychotic Persons, Senile Dependents, and Familyless Men with Chronic Serious Illness. — Skid Row houses many men in very poor mental health, and a small but important percentage of these are cases that would be institutionalized if they lived

in other neighborhoods. Since they are receiving no treatment, their prospects for rehabilitation on Skid Row are almost zero. At the present time these cases come to official attention only if they are picked up by the police (and not always then), or if they are on the welfare rolls and a social worker diagnoses their difficulty. Power to recommend a psychiatric examination, with appropriate legal proceedings, should be given to the director of the Reading Room, the chief interviewers at Cathedral Shelter, Salvation Army, Pacific Garden Mission, Christian Industrial League, Travelers Aid, and Catholic Charities. It is not necessary to set up a new screening organization; these established agencies know about these men but are not presently empowered to act nor encouraged to make a recommendation. As homeless men deteriorate to the point where they require institutionalization, they must rely upon the charitable organizations. Case workers in the existing organizations serving Skid Row have the insight necessary to detect these men and to make a recommendation for investigation. Since this arrangement requires no new facilities or personnel, it is inexpensive. In the first six months of operation, this program might bring into public institutions 300 or more defectives. Thereafter it would bring in only the new cases, which would be much fewer.

Item 3. Care for Familyless Elderly Persons, and Housing for Workingmen Who Are Not Alcoholics. — The present research has shown that Skid Row houses many victims of poverty in old age, who live in or near Skid Row for economic reasons only. The resource persons favored overwhelmingly taking advantage of the Federal Government's program of housing for the aged to improve the residential situation of this group of men. This action could be taken in conjunction with Item 4 and Item 10. It is doubtful whether an "old men's home" would appeal to these men, whereas an all-male rooming house or hotel with rooms for light housekeeping where some younger, orderly men also stay, would be a better arrangement. Small structures, with enough rooms to be operated on a self-sustaining basis, with an adequate staff and auxiliary recreation and other facilities suitable for elderly men, is indicated. Low-cost meals of wholesome, well-prepared food should be available (but not mandatory except to persons on disbursing orders), and within the budget of individuals on Social Security and other pensions and welfare. Under no circumstances should alcoholics or mentally ill men be allowed to remain because these categories of persons are most disliked by elderly men and workingmen. The premises must be kept free of jackrollers.

This facility should not be located in a family residential area but should have a location similar to the present Skid Row — between commercial and industrial activities, with some open space of its own. The reasons for preferring a nonresidential location for such units is that

these men would interact little with family persons, and many of them have personality disorders of a mild or moderate type which make them poor risks in neighborhoods where there are children. In any other type of location they would have an independent blighting effect. Yet they should not themselves be blighted by being forced to co-exist with the alcoholism segment of Skid Row. Facilities should definitely be moved away from concentrations of taverns and the drinking culture. Such structures should have offices for use when necessary by case workers who would handle the welfare needs of the elderly men (as well as other residents), and make necessary referrals. Space should also be provided for religious services, recreation, and other activities undertaken by private religious organizations and other charitable organizations. A part of the program would include sheltered or semi-sheltered employment at some nearby points for men capable of being partially self-supporting. The State Employment Service might sponsor a campaign to help obtain employment for such men.

The general setting for such a place should be nonresidential. A small park or other open space of adequate size could be made available. Easy access to other parts of the city by public transportation would be important. This facility need not be operated as a public or governmental institution. Private corporations, operating under a charter that limited them to a small margin of profit in exchange for assistance in furnishing buildings and facilities, could be tax-paying and competing units. There should, however, be strict regulations concerning the standards of cleanliness, comfort, sanitation, and service to customers. No taverns should be allowed to be operated by the management, and the welfare and recreation spaces should be maintained without charge either to the city or to the patrons. Certainly one such unit, located between Cook County Hospital and a nearby industrial area, should be tried on an experimental basis.

This program, also, would be comparatively inexpensive in the long run — federal funds are available to bear a substantial portion of the cost, and the cost of welfare services under such a set-up probably would be less than at present. Planners should not overlook the rather elementary fact that the flophouse industry has been an extremely profitable one. The income from low-cost one-room units is very substantial in relation to investment. Present operators of Skid Row facilities should be allowed to bid for the privilege of operating the new ones. In fact, Chicago has one or two companies that already have such a favorable reputation among Skid Row men for being honest, humane, and fair that allowing these companies to operate the first facility, under municipal regulation, would help greatly in assuring its success. Bureaucratic management could turn an otherwise viable solution into a tool for machine politics.

Item 4. Medical Rehabilitation of Indigent Disabled Workingmen. — A selected list of disorders and remediable disabilities that commonly afflict low-income workingmen should be drawn up by medical authorities. Welfare workers in both the public and private organizations should be informed that men with these disabilities may obtain treatment. In this way their earning power might be increased, or their descent into a dependent status might be checked. This list need not be long or overly generous. It would include such things as hernia, all fractures and wounds, however received, surgery to correct organic malfunctioning, and medical care for kidney stones, gallstones, etc. In as far as possible, this should be treated as an interest-free loan, to be repaid in earnings after the man has returned to work. The state should be asked to provide a revolving fund for this purpose. Such a program should include men with families as well as familyless men. Meanwhile, private charitable organizations that operate medical facilities should be encouraged to expand their activities to do more medical rehabilitation work, and should be given whatever assistance is possible for this purpose.

Facilities should be established for providing medical aid to dangerously ill men who do not have welfare status. The many deaths from pneumonia and similar disorders should be greatly reduced by making emergency treatment more readily available to indigent men. The current experience of the Salvation Army and other missions which have medical programs should be studied with an eye to expanding and enlarging them to handle simple rehabilitation as well as first-aid-type situations. The more complex disorders, of course, require more elaborate medical facilities.

Item 5. Occupational Rehabilitation and Upgrading. — A high percentage of the younger men on Skid Row indicated a desire for training to allow them to escape from the ranks of unskilled labor. Their aspirations were, in general, modest and realistic. At present there are facilities for giving occupational rehabilitation to disabled persons. At very low cost, experimental evening classes in automotive mechanics or other desired topics could be initiated at a nearby high school. Many cities already have a program of adult education to increase literacy. This could be expanded to include vocational training to increase earning power of workers without skills. If existing public education facilities were used, an experiment of this type could be tried out for the cost of the teacher, materials, and overhead. Widespread publicity should be given to such a program, with counselors at all present centers recommending enrollment to their younger clients. As described below, this could be a part of the rehabilitation of chronic alcoholics.

Item 6. Treatment for Skid Row Alcoholics. — This is a complex topic. The important recommendation is that a program of experimental

treatment should be started. Comments by resource persons suggest very strongly that a low-cost program of treatment for Skid Row alcoholics might be carried out with moderate success. This program should not be aimed at the cooperative man who joins Alcoholics Anonymous voluntarily, but at the uncooperative chronic drunk who repeatedly is arrested. It should be frankly experimental, trying in combination all of the things that show promise but which are inexpensive. It might consist of sentencing chronic alcoholics to thirty days in a special section of Bridewell where social workers would try to motivate them to undergo further treatment for alcoholism while they are being "dried out" and brought back to good physical condition. The fact that men who have been jailed try spontaneously to "stay on the wagon" was reported by resource persons as a possible entering wedge. The treatment center for such men might include employment, attendance at occupational training classes, and instruction in simple terms about the nature of personal disorganization. The men would be induced to do basic self-analysis and self-evaluation. After a second thirty to sixty days in such a program (possibly also of a confinement nature), they could be placed in a sheltered halfway house, provided with employment, and given moral support by a resident welfare worker. Alcoholics Anonymous and the various private welfare groups should be allowed to participate to the extent that these groups recognize the psychological aspects of the problem and would regard religious activities as one part of a larger program, but not the entire program.

If the city were to make the facilities in the Bridewell available and were to use the City Farm as a halfway house, it is entirely probable that the Cook County Welfare Department and the Welfare Council of Metropolitan Chicago could enlist the cooperation of the various private welfare organizations to staff such a program, at least on an experimental basis for two or three years. With only a modest effort by public and private agencies, a pilot project could be started in Chicago. It is strongly urged that the Metropolitan Welfare Council, the Cook County Department of Welfare, and the mayor explore the possibility of immediately starting "classes" of fifty Skid Row chronic uncooperative familyless alcoholics through such a program, keeping careful records of the results, varying the program in the light of experience, and using all of the advice and help they can get from existing agencies. Meanwhile, all of the present agencies should be encouraged to continue their programs. This would simply be an additional program to strike at the "hard core" of chronic alcoholism. This program should not be one of "coddling"; the men should be made to earn their keep by working while in the program. Programs of this type are now operating in Scandinavian countries. The fact that these countries have no Skid Rows is due largely to the fact that chronic alcoholics are undergoing en-

SKID ROW POISONS YOUTH. TEEN AGERS HAVING A FROLIC IS A COMMON SIGHT. TRUANT BOYS LIKE TO ROAM HERE

CAN MODERN SCIENCE REHABILITATE HIM? WE ARE NOT TRYING TO FIND OUT

forced treatment in which they earn their way.

If Chicago's program were brought to a point where 200 alcoholics (100 in the Bridewell and 100 on the Farm) were undergoing treatment after the 200-300 institutional cases had been removed, Skid Row would take on a completely different character. Within the course of one year, 800-1,000 men would be affected, and within a three-year period, a systematic effort would have been made to give every Skid Row alcoholic a chance to reorganize his life before having broken his health. Men who stay "dry" after completing the program might be lodged in the men's residences described in Item 3. As has already been pointed out, at the present time vast funds are being spent for police, inspection, feeding and clothing alcoholics, with almost no public expenditures to try to make them self-supporting again. The mere fact that 200 of the repeaters are undergoing enforced treatment at any one time would immediately cut the number of daily arrests by perhaps one-half or more, and within a year they could be down to 15-20 percent of present volume. The program could cause the volume of municipal expenditures to be greatly reduced. The prospect is certainly worthy of a trial.

Item 7. Sheltered Employment. — This is a movement that is gaining favor in the care of elderly persons. It should be expanded to include men who are disabled or handicapped and also men who have been chronically unemployed through no fault of their own.

Item 8. Assimilation of Ex-Convicts. — As penitentiaries turn out larger numbers of parolees, the problem of readjustment becomes greater and greater. Many of the new arrivals on Skid Row are recruited from this source. If Skid Rows are to be eliminated, more effective and more encompassing welfare work must be done, both while the men are still in prison and after they have been released.

Item 9. Treatment of Bums. — Probably the last residents of the cubicle hotels, if the present program were put into full effect, would be this group of men. The rather harsh recommendations of resource persons for their treatment are probably necessary. As other uses for cubicle-type hotels decline, perhaps some type of minimum rehabilitation and retraining program with strict discipline might be initiated in one of these units.

Item 10. Rehousing Social Isolates. — Throughout this study it has been made clear that many men on Skid Row are not drinkers but are just "odd personalities," who prefer a life of isolation from average society. They work and support themselves and are not a welfare burden to the community. These men could be rehoused in the structures

described in Item 3 or in low-cost rooming houses renovated as a part of urban renewal. Little, if any, welfare work needs to be done for them, although improved recreational facilities might allow some of them to be assimilated. In making provision for these men, it should be kept in mind that many, if not most, have personal problems or are psychological deviates in comparison with the general population. Although it should be easy for those who desire it to pass into other neighborhoods, whatever housing is provided for these men should not be forcibly scattered throughout residential areas generally, for the reasons given in Item 3. All of this housing need not be new housing; some of it could result from converting buildings in areas undergoing redevelopment.

Item 11. Removing Economic Exploitation. — There are several practices on Skid Row that are aimed at taking unfair advantage of the men because they are in no position to bargain, to defend themselves, or to demand justice when their rights as citizens are violated. Although many businessmen and other persons who have had contact with Skid Row men have great sympathy and understanding and try very hard to assist them, there are some employers who exploit these men even though they know that it only causes the men to sink deeper into a hopeless situation.

The fact that some of these practices are carried out by very large corporations and are perfectly legal does not alter the fact that they are anti-social in nature and are in the same category as child-labor practices and other unscrupulous activities that have long since been made the subject of special legislation. Some of these practices have existed for so long on Skid Row that not only the persons doing the exploiting, but also politicians, and even the men themselves, have lost all sense of the inhumanity involved and have come to regard these practices as "the way things are done."

Following are some of the practices that degrade the men and thwart their efforts to leave; efforts should be launched to get each of these things changed:

a. Private employment agencies charge exorbitant prices for jobs. It is not uncommon for these agencies to take one-third or more of the wages a man earns. Since the man is in the lowest wage bracket already, this means that he can earn barely enough to keep himself — even when he stays on Skid Row. Steady jobs often must be bought by a large payment in advance. Since steady jobs pay weekly or bi-monthly, it is hard for a spot-job worker to accumulate enough capital both to pay the labor office's tribute and to sustain himself until his first pay. In a situation where there is widespread and chronic unemployment, as has been shown to be the case on Skid Row, the men are desperate and are willing to strike almost any kind of a wage bargain. From one point of

view, the action of some labor offices on Skid Row forces the men into a position of semi-slavery. They are crushed to a point where they have no choice but to work on terms dictated by a few powerful labor offices. The men told stories of kick-back arrangements between employment offices and the personnel offices of large firms employing large numbers of casual laborers on an intermittent basis, and of being fired from "steady" jobs after a short time in order that the labor office could again fill the job and again collect its fee, all under arrangement with the personnel office of the employers. There seems, also, to be widespread favoritism in furnishing work, and this is not unrelated to kick-backs the men must make to office clerks and other personnel in order to get a job almost every day.

There is considerable evidence, gathered in the process of this study, to show that similar activities take place in the awarding of jobs as operatives and lower-grade white-collar workers. It is said that in many employment offices the job-givers draw no salary except the "cut" they get from the pay of the people they place, and that they have a great deal of latitude in working with employers' personnel officers in establishing hiring arrangements. It is quite possible that the situation on Skid Row is only one example of a widespread condition in private employment agencies that is in need of social legislation to protect the citizen from exploitative practices.

These comments do not apply to all employment agencies on Skid Row. There is, however, enough evidence to warrant an investigation of the entire field of private employment firms, perhaps by the United States and state employment services.

b. Currently it is very common for the men to work at jobs that clearly are covered by Social Security, but to receive no Social Security credit because the employer or the labor officer does not bother making the deduction. It is obvious that this is one group of men that most needs the protection of Social Security, both because of the high rate of breakdown in health and the inability of the men to save for their retirement. Arrangements should be made to see that Skid Row men get Social Security credit for every hour they work. This practice forces onto public welfare rolls large numbers of men who otherwise would derive some pension payments (or larger payments) from Social Security. Aside from housewives, who are notorious for not deducting Social Security for domestic help, probably the greatest concentration of noncompliance with the Social Security laws takes place in Skid Row areas. So common is this practice that even the State Employment Office for casual workers does not always enforce these laws with employers who hire day laborers through them. It is difficult to comprehend why very large and wealthy firms, which regularly pay the employer's share of Social Security taxes for their full-time employees, begrudge the few

dollars and the comparatively small amount of paper work it would take to see that the trucksful of ragged men they pick up on West Madison Street have minimum protection when they are no longer able to work. The only explanation seems to be that "it just isn't the custom" or "it's too much bother."

c. Tie-in arrangements between hiring agencies and hotels should be abolished. These dictate that one must sleep in a particular hotel if one wants a job. Sometimes this takes place because the employment office or a family member also owns a hotel on Skid Row. At other times it is simply an arrangement between an employment office and a manager of a hotel. Usually, it is the smaller, less business-like labor contractors and the poorest, most dilapidated, and most disliked hotels that do this. If a man objects to this loudly enough and goes to the State Employment Service, he can get his deduction for hotel room refunded. But most men do not know their rights or do not have the courage to defend them since the job is very likely to end as soon as a rightful protest is registered. It is regrettable that, although individual instances of this type are corrected rather promptly when brought to official attention, nothing is done to make certain that similar actions will not take place in the future. Taverns also are sometimes involved in these tie-ins.

d. Money is often loaned on Skid Row at exorbitant rates. Interest rates of 50 percent for as little as three days are common. Money is loaned or advanced against pay checks by pawnshops, taverns, and restaurants. A man who expects to be paid at the end of the week may draw on his wages in advance at a rather standard rate of two dollars for three. This includes the cashing of "identities" of gandy dancers, whereby a man is sent back to Chicago to collect his pay and is given an "identity" (identification payroll slip) which he must present at the railroad office. There is often delay causing week-ends without pay between arrival in Chicago and receipt of money. At certain established places identities may be cashed at usurious rates. Or they may be cashed at a tavern when a man begins to drink. The bartender deducts the amount spent, the intoxicated gandy dancer never remembers how many drinks he had or gave away, and has nothing but the bartender's word for what happened. He wakes up penniless and must live off the mission soup-lines until he can get another paycheck.

e. The present system of recruiting, operating, and paying railroad maintenance workers only stimulates and perpetuates this drinking culture. Railroads and commissaries should change their hiring, operating, and payroll systems. Throughout this study it has become clear that the hard core of excessive drinking on Skid Row centers around the gandy dancers and freight-yard workers. The present system makes it impossible for a railroad maintenance worker to aspire to a normal life and forces him to seek his social life in Skid Row surroundings.

Thus, the railroads have helped to institutionalize Skid Row. If there were once advantages to this type of arrangement, they have diminished over the years, as Skid Row has become less and less a habitat of able-bodied men and more and more a refuge for unfortunates who have no other resource. It is also doubtful whether this is the only workable or feasible way of doing it. In view of the very high costs involved, both to a city and to the men themselves, an effort should be made to inform the railroads of the effects of their policies and to solicit their cooperation in working out a new employment arrangement that is less conducive to degeneracy. These comments apply to the commissaries that hire off Skid Row as well as to railroads. The simple act of moving the railroad employment offices into the heart of an industrial district where there are no nearby residences, of paying the men by check, and of hiring along the line instead of off Skid Row, would do much to prevent serious exploitative abuses.

f. The minimum-wage laws are openly broken, both in spirit and in deed, along Skid Row. Some industries, such as bottle, pasteboard, and other scavenging companies, manage to get their work done at rates as low as fifty cents an hour, by declaring that the men who pull the carts or push the baby buggies are independent operators. Skid Row hotels and restaurants also pay very low wages to night watchmen, janitors, and dishwashers. By making a tie-in arrangement between salary and room or board, the man gets paid less than the minimum wage, even when his pay check and benefits are given their combined cash value. Unfortunately, many missions are guilty of this practice too, in the employment they offer. Often their workers are not sinners or drunks but are just desperately poor. While they are getting "rehabilitated," they refinish furniture or do other productive work at substandard wages. Of course, some of these men are "mission stiffs," who do as little work as possible but maintain a highly religious attitude in order to be allowed to stay. It is admittedly difficult to draw the fine line between charity for the poor and economic exploitation of a man who is penniless, discouraged, and frightened. A careful review of minimum-wage compliance should be made of every hotel, restaurant, mission, employment agency, and firm known to employ numbers of Skid Row men. In this connection it should be pointed out that many employment offices pay the men exactly the minimum wage (or a nickel an hour more) and then pocket the difference between the minimum wage and the higher rate that the employer actually pays.

g. Some police officers on Skid Row were charged by the men with jackrolling after arrest, or with using threats of arrest as a means of extracting money from them. Also, they are charged by hotel owners with withholding police service unless they are paid an established fee for each "call," and of expecting gifts at Christmas and on other occa-

sions. It is recommended that these allegations be explored and conditions rectified in as far as the allegations are found to be correct.

h. The laws concerning the sale of liquor to intoxicated persons should be enforced, with severe punishment administered to taverns which fail to comply and police officers who fail to enforce. The present practice of selling liquor to any man who has the price of a drink, or who is able to lift a drink to his mouth, encourages jackrolling, leads to brutal beatings and death for many men, and hastens the development of heavy drinkers into alcoholic derelicts. Along West Madison, North Clark, and South State Streets, there is a highly efficient system for collecting the men who collapse from drinking and installing them in the police lockup. This is done even though the men have broken no statute, but nothing is done to punish the tavern that openly breaks the law by selling the last few drinks that brought about this condition. Many experts along Skid Row agree that dozens of men would go home and sleep it off if they were refused further drink after they showed definite signs of intoxication, but taverns help them go the whole way so that they end up in jail with all of their money gone, often seriously injured, or dead in the morgue. Many of the deaths from pneumonia are traceable directly to exposure while drunk. It has been possible for so long on Skid Row to drink oneself into unconsciousness, that police, bartenders, and the public have come to accept it, even though most taverns in other places have learned to comply with the law. One aspect of the problem is that there are too many taverns on Skid Row, and many of them need to sell every drink they can in order to pay off all their obligations and still show a profit.

i. Hotels and police should be prevented from being brutal to the men. The bouncers in some hotels are heartlessly cruel; they beat, kick, and bully men who are intoxicated, or even elderly men who do not do as they say. In making arrests, some police officers are very handy with their clubs. Some men interviewed showed broken wrists or stiff shoulders and other deformities which they claimed were inflicted by police either at the time of arrest or in the station. Many of the hotel clerks are ex-alcoholics, and it is often said along Skid Row that nobody is more cruel and intolerant toward a drunk than an ex-drunk.

Special training needs to be given police officers, and police officers with sadistic tendencies should not be allowed to be on duty in areas where they encounter alcoholics. If it is true that chronic alcoholics are sick men in need of professional help, brutal treatment by police and hotel clerks only worsens their condition. The kind of physical mistreatment that sometimes takes place is reminiscent of the tales of beatings of mental patients in asylums before the 20th century. There are some persons in the world who seem to enjoy inflicting severe bod-

ily pain on other human beings without risking retaliation. Unfortunately, some of these persons sometimes get jobs where helpless alcoholics come within their grasp. It is also unfortunate that no Skid Row man feels that he dare complain about this, either in court when he is being tried or by filing a complaint, for he is deathly afraid of the worse beating he would receive thereafter. Also, who will take the word of a confirmed drunk over that of a police officer or a hotel clerk?

j. A careful health and sanitation inspection should be made of hotels and missions. This should include an inspection of mattresses, cleanliness of cubicle walls, and the germ-breeding capacity of damp, nonventilated cubicles that never see sunlight. Unfortunately, some of the dirtiest, most undesirable sleeping-places are in missions, as well as some of the cleanest places. Severe action should be brought against all hotels and missions that are a threat to health, that are dirty, vermin-ridden, and that use dirty linens and blankets. It is unavoidable that shower-rooms and toilets in cubicle hotels will be messy at certain times of the day, because of the large number of men per unit allowed by building codes at present, but in some places there is little effort to combat this unfortunate situation by more frequent and more thorough cleaning.

k. Prostitution in taverns, hotels, and other places should be more conscientiously controlled. Often prostitution is a normal part of operating a Skid Row tavern, where "B-girls" encourage the men to do more than just drink. Some Skid Row hotels or hotels in nearby areas knowingly harbor prostitution activities. In some hotels the cleaning maids are said to do a lively business. Since the parties involved are among the least informed and least health-conscious segments of the population, Skid Row prostitutes are almost certain to have one of the highest rates of venereal infection.

Item 12. Prevention of Skid Rows. — In the final analysis, the best type of Skid Row control will have been achieved if men can be prevented from needing to live on a Skid Row. The results of this study have shown that the number of men arriving on Skid Row would be reduced almost to zero if the following preventive steps were taken:

a. Support indigent elderly pensioners at a level of living higher than that found on Skid Row. Such a program would shut off the flow of victims of poverty to Skid Row areas.
b. Patch the existing loopholes in the Social Security, minimum-wage, and pensions-for-industrial-accidents laws, and develop a system whereby pensions would be inflation-free, so that at retirement every workingman who had not been a bum would have a minimally adequate level of living assured him.
c. Provide needed medical care. This would not only greatly diminish the supply of men arriving on Skid Row, but would also

COPENHAGEN, A FAVORITE PORT WITH THE WORLD'S SAILORS, HAS A WATER-FRONT TAVERN AREA, BUT NO BOWERY – TYPE SKID ROW

THE AMERICAN HOMELESS MAN IS A TINY FRACTION OF 200 MILLION PEOPLE, BUT HIS IS TRULY A JUNGLE EXISTENCE

cause Skid Row to shrink.

d. Establish rehabilitation and employment programs for handicapped persons.
e. Take advantage of the fact that all programs that promote mental health tend to reduce the Skid Row population. They reduce the number of men who flee from regular society to spend a life of comparative isolation on Skid Row.
f. Set up a program of detection and treatment for alcoholism in its early stages.
g. Take advantage of the fact that any program that would tend to reduce crime and other forms of social deviation would reduce the flow of persons to Skid Row. Moreover, any program for improving the rehabilitation of criminals and correction of social deviation during youth or early adulthood would have the same effect.
h. Improve the quality of housing in all slums and widen the gap between Skid Row existence and other forms of living to make the Skid Row type of life even less appealing and intensify the desire to live away from such areas.

## CONCLUSION

The program outlined above tries to take full advantage of the many splendid efforts that are already being made to care for and to rehabilitate Skid Row men. It calls for a little closer cooperation and coordination of these units and asks them to be a little less doctrinaire in their approach to helping the Skid Row men solve their problems. It would, however, preserve the integrity of each unit, looking forward to a day when the program of prevention and treatment would be so effective that all would be forced to close their doors. This is one field of operations where success by a welfare agency means its demise. This program also calls for a greater cooperation and coordination between the functions of municipal planning, housing, and redevelopment, and the activities of welfare agencies, both public and private. Finally, it calls for an aggressive effort to try to correct the situations that create Skid Rows, instead of just trying to police and preserve existing Skid Rows. Instead of deliberately planning and designing for a new Skid Row area as an inevitable part of the American metropolis, plans should be made to make Skid Rows unnecessary. From a sociological and psychological point of view it can be done. Economically, it would constitute an effort to stop a large unproductive drain on the municipal economy and free a large tract of valuable land for other use.

## I. INTERVIEW WITH HOMELESS MEN

1. How is your health? Would you say that it is excellent, good, fair, or poor?

INTERVIEWER: INTERJECT AFTER FIRST QUESTION: Oh, by the way! I should tell you that some of these questions will be quite personal. Everything you say will be kept confidential and will be used as material for our studies without mentioning names in any way. If you think any of the questions are too personal, you may decline to answer if you wish. But it will help us most if you can answer all of the questions. Is this okay?

WE ARE INTERESTED IN ALL KINDS OF ILLNESS, WHETHER SERIOUS OR NOT--

2-1. Were you sick at any time last week or the week before? What was the matter? Anything else?

2-2. Last week or the week before did you have any accidents or injuries, either at home or away from home? What were they? Anything else?

2-3. Last week or the week before did you feel any ill effects from an earlier accident or injury? What were these effects? Anything else?

2-4. Last week or the week before did you take any medicine or treatment for any condition (besides which you told me about)? For what conditions? Anything else?

2-5. At the present time do you have any ailments or conditions that have continued for a long time? (If "No":) Even though they don't bother you all the time?

2-6. Have you had any of these conditions during the past 12 months? (Read Card A, condition by condition; record any conditions mentioned in the column for the person.)

2-7. Do you have any of these conditions? (Read Card B, condition by condition; record any conditions mentioned in the column for the person.)

FOR EACH ILLNESS MENTIONED ASK:

A. Did you see a doctor?

B. What did the doctor say it was? What kind of trouble was it? What was cause of ___? EYES: Can you read a newspaper with glasses?

C. What part of body was affected (hurt)?

D. Did it cause you to cut down on your usual activities for 1 day or more? Days of reduced activity? Days in bed?

E. Would you have worked except for ___?

F. Days work lost due to ___?

G. When did you first notice ___? Which month?

H. Days in bed during past 12 months with ___?

3. FOR EACH AILMENT LISTED ABOVE ASK:

A. What kind of treatment did you get for it during the past two weeks? (No medical treatment, self medication, druggist prescribed, talked to a doctor, went to a clinic, went to a hospital.)

B. FOR ALL AILMENTS IN WHICH NO TREATMENT, SELF MEDICATION OR DRUGGIST PRESCRIBED ONLY: Why didn't you see a doctor or go to a clinic?

C. FOR ALL AILMENTS IN WHICH DOCTOR, CLINIC OR HOSPITAL VISIT INVOLVED: How did you manage the cost? Were you able to pay it yourself, was it free, or did someone else pay for it? (How much did you pay? Who paid for it? How did you happen to get free care?

4-1. During the past twelve months have you been a patient in a hospital?

A. IF "YES" ASK: How many times were you in the hospital?
B. FOR EACH TIME PROVIDE THE FOLLOWING INFORMATION:
1. When did you enter the hospital?
2. How many days were you in the hospital this time? (Count only days in the past year.)
3. What was the matter? (Anything else?)
4. Where any operations performed on you during this stay in the hospital? (What was the operation? Any other operation?)
5. What is the name of the hospital you were in? (Get location if not well-known.)

4-2. How many teeth have you pulled or had knocked out? How many teeth have you had replaced by dental work? How long has it been since you went to a dentist?
A. ASK EVERYONE, EXCEPT THOSE WITH NO TEETH: Are your teeth bothering you now or do you need to have dental work done? (Describe the trouble.)

5. How are your nerves? Are you inclined to be nervous or "on edge"? How often do you feel this way? (Never, occasionally, frequently, most of the time?)

6. AGE, HEIGHT, WEIGHT:
A. What is the date of your birth?
B. How tall are you? (Estimate if respondent DK)
C. How much do you weigh now? (Estimate if respondent DK)
D. How much did you weigh when you were a young man--say 20-25 years old?

7. And now about strength. Most of your life have you felt that you were as strong, stronger, or not as strong as the average man your size?

8. Do you have any tattoos on your body or arms? (How many different times have you had tattoos put on?) How old were you when you had your first one?

9. How would you describe your typical day? Take an average day and think of how you spend it--what things do you do? You may start with getting up in the morning if you want.
PROBES: What time do you get up? Where do you eat breakfast? Where do you go after breakfast? What do you do then? Where do you eat lunch usually? Where do you eat supper? What do you do in the evenings?

10. A. How do you feel about living on (West Madison) (North Clark) (South State) Street? In general do you like or dislike it?
B. First, what don't you like (are there things you don't like) about living here? (Anything else?)
C. And what do you like (are there any things you do like) about living here? (Anything else?)
D. How long do you expect to stay here? (Do you expect to move away from here? If so, when will it be?)

11. A. How long have you lived in this neighborhood? (Refers only to present trip here.)
B. How did you come to choose (West Madison) (South State) (North Clark) Street as a place to stay? Have there been any events or circumstances in your life that caused you to move here? Would you tell me what they were and what happened? (Well, you are living away from any family in a hotel where only men stay. Many people would consider it an unusual way to live. Is there any particular reason for being here in your case?)

(INTERVIEWER: AT THIS POINT, THE RESPONDENT IS TO BE ENCOURAGED TO "TELL HIS STORY" IN HIS OWN WORDS. RECORD IT VERBATIM AS NEARLY AS POSSIBLE. USE ONLY PROBES THAT STIMULATE HIM TO TALK, BUT NOT TO EXPLORE ANY PARTICULAR AREA. DO NOT ENCOURAGE HIM TO MAKE A LENGTHY STATEMENT--JUST GET HIS FIRST-THOUGHTS EXPLANATION. LATER QUESTIONS WILL EXPLORE SPECIFIC TOPICS.
REMEMBER WHAT HE SAYS, SO THAT IN ASKING SUBSEQUENT QUESTIONS YOU WILL

AVOID MAKING HIM REPEAT ALL OF IT WHEN HE HAS GIVEN YOU SOME OF THE INFORMATION YOU NEED.)

12. How do you like living in this (place like this) (hotel) (lodging place) (mission)?
    A. What things do you like about it? (Are there any things you do like about it?) (Anything else?)
    B. And what don't you like about it? (Are there any things you don't like about it?) (Anything else?)
13. If you could live in the neighborhood you like best, where would you choose to live--in this hotel, someplace else in this neighborhood, in another neighborhood, or some other place?
    IF OTHER THAN "THIS HOTEL": What kind of a place would you like to stay in--a men's hotel, an apartment of your own, in an apartment shared with someone else, in a rooming house for men, in a private home, or some other place?
14. Suppose some of the men's hotels on (West Madison) (South State) (North Clark) Street are torn down to make way for better housing. And suppose that new housing is to be built especially for you men who live here, to rent at a price you can afford to pay. WHAT KINDS OF PLACES TO LIVE SHOULD BE BUILT FOR YOU? (Suppose you could tell the builders what sort of places to put up. What would you like to see built for you to live in yourself?)
    A. (IF NOT ANSWERED SPONTANEOUSLY) Here is a list of different kinds of places: Open dormitories, cubicles or cages, single rooms for each man, like at a YMCA, apartments where two or three men could live together and do their own cooking and housekeeping. Which of these would you like best for yourself?
    B. If a place like that (the one chosen) could be built so that it is modern, clean and well run, how much a week would you be willing and able to pay to stay there?
    C. Who do you think should manage these places--private business men or a government housing agency run by the City of Chicago? What are your reasons for saying that?
    D. Where do you think they should put new housing for men? Here, near (West Madison) (South State) (North Clark), or some other place?
15. A. What do you think of the other men that live on this street? In thinking of where you would like to live, would you like to have people like these men around you, or would you like to have different people? (COPY RESPONSE VERBATIM)
    B. What do you like about the men? (Anything else?)
    C. What don't you like about them? (Anything else?)
    D. How many close friends do you have here?
        1. IF "NO" CLOSE FRIENDS: Why do you suppose you have not found any friends among them?
        2. IF HAS FRIENDS: Are your friends different from the other men on the street? (In what way?)
16. How much have you lived in cubicle-type hotels (rooming houses) such as this? (About how many years?)
17. During the past year, what kinds of places have you lived in? How long in each? (Cubicles, rooming houses, labor camps, living outdoors, others (SPECIFY).)
18. Now I'd like to ask you about any work you did during the past week. Last week did you work at any job?
    IF "NO" SKIP TO QUESTION 19. IF "YES" ASK SERIES A-J: TELL ME ABOUT EACH JOB YOU HAD:
    A. What kind of work did you do? (occupation)
    B. Was it a spot job or a steady job?
    C. How did you get this job? (If employment office, name the office) (source)
    D. What's the name of the company (person) you worked for? (firm)
    E. Where is the company located? (address)

F. What kind of place is that? (What do they do or make there?) (industry)
G. How many hours did you work at this job last week? (hours)
H. How much did you get paid per hour on this job? (pay)
I. Where were you paid off? (Specify exact place as follows: At place of work, at employment office, at a tavern(specify), other place(specify).)
J. Who paid you?

19. ASK ONLY IN NOT WORKING LAST WEEK: (IF EMPLOYED ONE OR MORE DAYS LAST WEEK, SKIP TO QUESTION 20.) Did you apply for work last week at any place? (Where?)
A. IF APPLIED: Why do you suppose you didn't get a job when you tried? (Is there any other reason?)
B. IF NOT LOOKING: What kept you from working or looking for work or didn't you want to work? (Unable to work, temporary illness, did not care to work, other(specify).)

20. Now I would like to know all of the cities you have been in during the past year, how long you stayed in each place, and the jobs you had while you were there.

21. A. About how many times have you been to Chicago and then moved away? (Count present residence as a time.)
B. Since coming here this last time, have you lived any place but on West Madison, South State, or North Clark? Where?
C. During how many weeks of the past year have you lived on one of Chicago's Skid Rows (West Madison, South State, or North Clark)?

22. Estimated wages last year:
A. During the past year, about how many weeks did you go without working even one day?
B. During the weeks that you did work, how many hours per week did you usually work? (I mean during the average week you worked.)
C. Think of the best paying and the lowest paid jobs you had and how long you worked at them; what would you say was your average pay per hour last year?

23. Do you get a pension of any kind--because of disability (injury), retirement (Social Security), or because of age (Public Assistance)? How much?
IF PENSION, ASK A AND B:
A. Where do you usually cash your pension check?
B. How do you arrange for room rent and meals for the month?

24. Last year did you receive money from rents or interest on property or savings you own? If so, how much did you receive from this source last year?

25. Last year did you receive money as a gift from relatives or friends? About how much did you receive?

26. On this card, I have some groupings of income. Which of these groupings most nearly matches the total income you had last year from all sources?
INTERVIEWER: CHECK INCOME AS FOLLOWS:
1. Weeks x hours x rate--estimated wages for the year (Number of weeks did not work subtracted from 52 gives number of weeks worked.)
2. Income from pension (monthly rate x 12)
3. Income from interest, rents, investments
4. Income from gifts of money

27. Have you ever been in military service? When did you serve? (No military service, World War I, World War II, Korean War, Other--before World War II, Other--after World War II.)
IF NO MILITARY SERVICE:
A. Why didn't you get drafted? (What was the reason for being excused?)
IF MILITARY SERVICE, ASK B-I:

B. What branch of service was that and what was your assignment? What did you do in the (Army) (Navy) (Marine Corps)? Were you an infantryman, a gunner, a pilot, or what?
C. What was the highest rate or rank you held?
D. How long were you in the service? (___ months)
E. Were you stationed overseas?
F. Did you ever have combat service? If so, for how many months?
G. Did you receive any disciplinary action while you were in the service? What was the offense and what was the punishment? (Army--court martial, company punishment; Navy--court marshall, captain's mast, were you ever in the brig?; Marine--court martial, captain's mast, brig)
H. How did (Army) (Navy) (Marine Corps) (Air Force) life affect you? Did it change you in any way? In what ways? (In any other way?)
I. What type of discharge did you get? (Honorable, Dishonorable(Specify cause), Without honor(Specify cause--probe for homosexual), Medical(Specify cause--probe for neuropsychiatric).)

28. A. What kinds of work have you done in your life? Have most of your jobs been pretty much like those you have done during the past year? Could you tell me which jobs you have held longest and how long you worked at each? (List jobs held one year or longer. If none in this category, list three "best" jobs.)
B. Which of these jobs did you like best?
C. Why did you happen to leave it?

29. How well do you like the work you have been doing recently? What do you (dislike) (like) about it?

30. Would you rather have "spot jobs" or a steady job?
A. IF "SPOT JOBS": Why don't you want a steady job? (Any other reason?)
B. IF PREFERS STEADY JOB (SEE ABOVE) BUT DOES NOT NOW HAVE A STEADY JOB: Do you think you could handle a steady job working five days a week, eight hours a day?
IF "NO": Why don't you think so?

31. If you could get free training to prepare you for a better job, would you be interested in taking it?
A. IF "NO": Why is that?
B. IF "YES": What kind of training would you want?
C. ASK ALL VETERANS OF WORLD WAR II OR KOREA: Did you try to get training under the G.I. bill? (If not, why not?)

32. A. How do you usually spend your spare time? Do you ever___? (How often do you ___?)
a. Go to the movies?
b. Go to a tavern or bar?
c. Go to see a live burlesque show with girls?
d. Go to a tattoo palace, penny arcade, shooting gallery?
e. Play checkers?
f. Play cards?
g. Bet on horses, play numbers, buy a lottery ticket?
h. Watch TV in the hotel lobby of your hotel?
i. Go to the reading room?
j. Go to church services at Salvation Army or at a mission?
B. In the last week, how many free meals have you had from the Salvation Army or from a mission?
C. In the last week, how many times have you had a free bed from the Salvation Army or from a mission?
D. Did you get any free clothing or shoes this winter since it started to get cold?
E. When the weather is warm and sunny, how much time do you spend on the street just talking to people or watching what's going on? (Almost none, Occasionally, An hour or two almost every day, Three or more hours almost every day)
F. When the weather is cold like it is now, how much of the time do

you usually spend in your room during the day?
G. What do you do when you are in your room in the daytime?

33. How would you like to spend your spare time?
A. Are there any special things that you would enjoy that you can't afford?
B. Are there any things that you can't do because there's no place to do them?
C. Have you ever had any hobbies that you'd like to take up again? What?

34. Have you ever been to a doctor or psychiatrist or been in the hospital because of a nervous condition?
IF SAW "DOCTOR," "PSYCHIATRIST," OR "WAS IN THE HOSPITAL." ASK A, B, AND C:
A. When was that?
B. Where was that?
C. Do you know what the doctors said about your case?

35. Where were you born? What was the name of the County and the State?

36. Where did you live during the time you were growing up? (Between the ages of 6 and 14.)
A. What was the name of the County, State, and Town?
B. Did you live on a farm, just outside town, or inside the town?
C. How long did you live there?

37. Where were your parents born? (State or foreign country)

38. What is the nationality of your parents? (e.g. French, German, Danish, etc.) (Where did your ancestors come from?)

39. What kind of work did your father do at the time you were growing up? (What was his occupation?)

40. A. What was your father's income like at that time? When you were growing up, was your family poor, very poor, comfortable, or well-to-do?
B. Did you always have enough to eat at home when you were a boy?
IF "NO": What was the trouble?

41. A. How old were you when you left home?
B. How did you happen to leave home then? What happened to make you leave home? (Were there any other reasons?)

42. What kind of person was your father?
A. What did you like best about him? (Anything else?)
B. And what did you dislike about him? (Anything else?)
C. (IF NOT ALREADY MENTIONED) Was he a heavy drinker? (Describe it.)
D. Did he ever serve a jail sentence? (What was it for?)

43. What kind of a person was your mother?
A. What did you like best about her? (Anything else?)
B. And what did you dislike about her? (Anything else?)
C. Did she drink?

44. How did your father and mother get along with each other?
A. Did they see eye to eye on most things or did they quarrel a lot?
B. If they quarrelled a lot, why did they quarrel?
C. Taking everything into consideration, would you say they had a happy marriage during the time you were a boy?

45. Which of your parents helped you the most when you were growing up--your father or your mother?

46. Which of your parents do you think you liked the most, your father or your mother? (Or both about the same?)
IF LOVED ONE PARENT MORE THAN THE OTHER: Why do you suppose you liked (her) (him) the most? (Any other reasons?)

47. How many children were there in your family altogether? Which child were you?
A. How well did you get along with your (brothers and sisters) (sisters) (brothers)? (What did you have trouble over?)
B. Did your parents treat all their children alike or was there a favorite? How did they treat you compared to the other kids?

48. A. Are either of your parents alive? How about your (father)(mother)

--is (he)(she) living?

B. (IF EITHER OR BOTH ARE DEAD, ASK:) When did (he)(she) die?

C. (IF BOTH ARE STILL LIVING, ASK:) Are they living together, or are they divorced or separated?

D. (IF ONE PARENT DEAD, FOR THE SURVIVING PARENT, ASK:) Did (he)(she) remarry? If so, when?

IF REMARRIED, ASK 1 and 2:

1. How old were you when (he)(she) remarried?
2. How did this marriage affect you? Did it change your plans any? (Did it have any other effects on you?)

49. What was the highest grade of school you attended? Did you complete that grade?

50. Here are some problems like they used to give you in school. See if you can still remember them. (Start at a level you estimate, going up or down as indicated in Spex.)

a. 3 x 3 ___ d. 11 x 11 ___
b. 9 x 9 ___ e. 56 ÷ 7 ___
c. 6+4+9 ___

51. And here are some words they used to teach you in reading. Do you still remember what they mean?

INTERVIEWER: TRY THE RESPONDENT AT THE LEVEL YOU ESTIMATE. IF HE PASSES IT GO A LEVEL HIGHER. IF HE MISSES ONE OR MORE, DESCEND A LEVEL. PROCEED UPWARD OR DOWNWARD UNTIL RESPONDENT DEFINES ALL WORDS IN A SET.

| | Level of ability |
|---|---|
| a. eyelash _____<br>roar _____<br>scorch _____ | DEFICIENT |
| b. muzzle _____<br>haste _____ | BORDERLINE |
| c. lecture _____<br>Mars _____<br>skill _____ | DULL |
| d. juggler _____<br>brunette _____<br>regard _____ | AVERAGE |
| e. lotus _____<br>incrustation _____<br>achromatic _____ | SUPERIOR |

52. How were your grades in school--very good, good, average, poor, or very poor?

53. Did you enjoy going to school?

A. What did you like about it? (Anything else?)
B. What did you dislike about it? (Anything else?)
C. What were your best subjects in school?
D. And what subjects were hardest for you or did you dislike most?

54. Why did you stop going to school? (Were there any other reasons?)

55. After you left regular school, did you take any special training, like apprenticeship training, correspondence school, anything like that?

56. What kind of a person were you when you were 15,20 years old? (What other traits did you have?)

IF NOT ALREADY ANSWERED ABOVE, ASK A-K:

A. Were you happy or unhappy? (What kinds of things bothered you?)
B. Did you know then for sure what you wanted to be? (What were your ideas about what you wanted to be then?)
C. Were you a hard worker, or were you inclined to be easy-going on the job?
D. Were you restless and always wanting to be on the go? (In what way?)

E. Did you have a lot of friends, only a few friends, or were you more of a "lone wolf"?
F. How did you spend your free time?
G. Did you date girls before you were 20 years old?
IF "YES": How often did you date them?
H. Did you have any close friends who were boys?
I. Did you run around a lot with a gang of boys?
J. Did you have a reputation for having a quick temper?
IF "YES": What kinds of things made you flare up? (How angry did you get?)
K. Did you ever get into trouble with the police when you were young?
IF "NO": ASK 3 ONLY.
IF "YES": ASK 1,2 , AND 3.
1. What kind of troubles did you have? Were you arrested?
IF "YES, WAS ARRESTED": Could you tell me more about that?
2. Were you sent to a reformatory or a prison?
3. Did any of your brothers or sisters have trouble with the police?

57. Do you ever see strange things like visions, fairies, ghosts, or things like that?
IF "YES": ASK A AND B.
A. Could you describe it a little more?
B. When do you see them?

58. Do you have any extraordinary powers or abilities not possessed by other persons?
IF "YES": What are these powers or abilities?

59. Do you ever hear people talking to you or about you when there is no one around?
IF "YES": ASK A AND B.
A. What kinds of things do they say?
B. When do you usually hear them?

60. Are you now married, divorced, widowed, separated, or never married?
IF "NEVER MARRIED": ASK QUESTION 61.
IF "MARRIED, DIVORCED, WIDOWED, OR SEPARATED": SKIP TO QUESTION 62.

61. Were you ever engaged to be married?
IF "NEVER ENGAGED," ASK A.
A. Were you ever in love, or did you ever date steady with one girl?
IF "YES": ASK B AND C.
B. What happened to break your engagement? Why was it broken?
1. Who broke the engagement--you or the girl?
2. Did you ever fall in love again after that?
C. ASK ALL RESPONDENTS WHO NEVER MARRIED: Why do you suppose you never got married? Do (did) women interest you much sexually?

62. IF "MARRIED, DIVORCED, WIDOWED, OR SEPARATED": How long did you and your wife live together?
A. What kind of a wife was she?
1. What things did you like best about her? (Anything else?)
2. And what did you dislike about her? (Anything else you disliked about your wife?)
B. How was your home life? (Could you tell me a little more about that?)
C. UNLESS WIDOWED: What caused your separation? Whose idea was the separation, yours or your wife's? What were the reasons for your separation? Who do you think was most to blame?

63. UNLESS NEVER MARRIED, ASK: How many children do you have? Can you tell me how old each one of them is? Are they married, widowed, divorced or single? Are they working? What sort of work does each do?

64. Have you written to or visited with your relatives during the past two years?

65. How do you feel toward your relatives?

66. Suppose you were sick and down and out. Would your relatives give you help if they knew where you were and knew you needed help?
67. Have you ever had persons to support--people that were (when you were married, was your family) completely dependent on you for their food, clothes, and everything?
IF "NO": How do you think you would feel if you were completely responsible for supporting a family?
68. Why do you suppose so many men on (West Madison) (South State) (North Clark) Street drink so much? (Any other reasons?)
ASK ONLY IF NOT COVERED ABOVE:
A. Some men say they drink so much because there's nothing else to do. Do you agree or disagree with that? (What makes you say that?)
B. Some men say they drink so much because of the environment--that is, with so many taverns here, it's hard not to drink a lot. Do you agree or disagree with that? (Why?)
C. Some say that you can't have very many friends here unless you spend a lot of time in the bars and buy a drink for people when you have money. Do you agree or disagree with that? (Why?)
69. How heavy a drinker are you? Do you consider yourself to be a heavy drinker, a moderate drinker, a light drinker, a periodic drinker, or don't you drink at all?
UNLESS "NEVER DRINK": ASK A-F:
A. About how much of the money you get do you spend on drinking? (Specify either fraction or percentage)
B. Do you have spells when you drink very heavy?
IF "YES": ASK 1 AND 2.
1. How often do you have these spells?
2. Why do you suppose you drink more at those times than at others?
C. What do you usually drink? Wine, beer, whiskey, or something else?
D. Why do you suppose you drink? What pleasure or satisfaction do you get from drinking? Have you ever found anything else that helps you _____(relax)? (What other satisfaction does it give you?
E. How do you drink? Do you usually buy at a bar or do you usually buy a bottle?
IF "BUY A BOTTLE," OR "HALF AND HALF," ASK 1 AND 2:
1. Where do you go to drink the bottle? (When you buy a bottle, where do you go to drink it?)
2. When you drink from a bottle are you usually alone or with others?
F. Do you ever feel guilty or sorry after you have been drinking? How often do you feel this way?
70. About how many days last week did you have some wine or whiskey to drink? (Did not drink at all?)
IF DRANK AT ALL: About how much did you drink in one day?
71. IF "NEVER DRINK," ASK: Were you ever a heavy drinker?
IF "YES," ASK:
1. When did you stop?
2. How did you stop?
3. Who helped you stop and how did they help you?
72. Do you ever feel like you have to take a drink in the morning just before or after breakfast? How often does this happen? (Never or almost never, Occasionally, A few times a week, Almost every day)
73. ASK ALL HEAVY DRINKERS: (FOR THIS QUESTION A HEAVY DRINKER IS ANY PERSON WHO (a) REPORTS HIMSELF AS SUCH IN ITEM 69; (b) WHO DRANK ON FIVE OR MORE DIFFERENT DAYS LAST WEEK AND WHOSE AVERAGE DAILY CONSUMPTION IS EQUIVALENT TO A PINT OF WINE OR THREE SHOTS OF WHISKEY; OR (c) WHO DRINKS ALMOST EVERY MORNING. IF IN DOUBT WHETHER HEAVY DRINKER, ASK THE QUESTION AND EDITORS WILL DECIDE.)
A. How did your heavy drinking develop? Please tell me about it. (Had you drunk much before that?) (What happened to start the

heavy drinking?) (And then what happened?) (And then?)

B. Were there any especially tough problems that started your drinking or did you just drift into it? (What were the problems?) (Any family problems?) (Any work problems?)

C. How did your family act about your heavy drinking?

D. How did your friends and neighbors act about your heavy drinking?

E. How did your boss and the people at work act about your heavy drinking?

F. Did you try to take any treatments for it? What kind of treatments did you take? (Who gave you the treatments?) (Why do you suppose they failed to keep you dry?)

74. A. About how many times would you say you have been arrested for being drunk? (Never, Less than 5 times, 5-10 times, 10-20 times, 20-30 times, More than 30 times.)

B. 1. And how many of those times were you sentenced to jail?

2. How many times have you been sentenced to several days in jail for being drunk?

C. When was the last time you were arrested for drunkenness?

D. Have you ever been hospitalized for drunkenness or as a result of being drunk?

1. How many times were you hospitalized?

2. Who took you to the hospital usually?

3. When did this happen?

4. What kind of treatment did you get?

75. How many times have you been jackrolled or robbed in the past year?

76. How many times, if any, have you had the D.T.'s? When?

77. Have you ever joined Alcoholics Anonymous, the Salvation Army program, or some other program that tries to help people stop drinking too much?

IF "JOINED A PROGRAM": Did this program help you or not?

78. Have you ever served a jail or penitentiary sentence for some offense besides being drunk?

IF "YES", FOR EACH TERM OF IMPRISONMENT ASK A-D AND ENTER IN COLUMNS/ BELOW:

A. What was the charge for which you were sent to jail?

B. How long was your sentence?

C. When did you get out?

D. Where was that?

HERE ARE SOME QUESTIONS ABOUT YOURSELF AS A PERSON:

79. If you were asked to describe yourself, what kind of a person would you say you are?

80. A. Do you ever feel that it is hopeless to try to get ahead? How often do you feel that way?

B. Why do you feel that way?

81. A. Do you think there are some people who want to hurt you? What kind of people are they?

B. Are there any special kinds of people you hate?

82. Do you associate with women nowadays?

IF "YES": ASK A-D:

A. How often?

B. Where do you meet them?

C. What kinds of women are they?

D. Do you go with the women who live around (West Madison) (South State) (North Clark) Street?

IF "NO": Why not?

83. People say that some of the men living around (West Madison) (South State) (North Clark) Street have sex experiences with other men.

A. How many of the men do you think do this more or less regularly? (Almost none of them, About a quarter of them, About half of them, About 3/4 of them, Almost all of them.)

B. During the past couple of years have you had an experience like that with another man or boy?

IF "YES": How often?

84. Here are some questions about religion.
A. Were you ever a member of any church? What church was that?
B. How about your parents? What church did they attend when you were growing up?
C. How religious was your (mother) (father)?
D. Do you believe in God?
E. How do you feel about churches in general?
F. Do you attend church services of the Salvation Army, the Christian Industrial League, Cathedral Shelters, Pacific Garden Mission, and other church groups like that? How do you feel about their religion?

85. If you had your life to live over again, what kinds of things would you do differently?

86. If you could make three wishes and they would all be granted, what would you ask for?
A. Do you think you first wish will come true?
IF "NO": Why not?
B. Do you think your second wish will come true?
IF "NO": Why not?
C. Do you think your third wish will come true?
IF "NO": Why not?

87. Do you think the police are doing a good job of protecting the people who live on this street?
ASK EVERYONE: In what way is it (good) (bad)?

88. Considering the prices they charge for a room, do you think the hotel operators are doing a good job of housing the men of (West Madison) (South State) (North Clark) Street? Are there any things they should do differently?

89. Considering the prices they charge for meals, do you think the restaurant operators on (West Madison) (South State) (North Clark) Street keep their places as clean as they should and are doing a good job of providing meals? Are there any things they should do differently?

90. Do you think the liquor stores, taverns, and bars on (West Madison) (South State) (North Clark) Street treat their customers fairly and run their places right? What things should they do differently?

91. A. Do you think the employment agencies (including railroad hiring offices) in Chicago are operated fairly and treat the workers right?
B. What things should they do differently?

92. I am going to list several organizations whose job is to help you men on (West Madison) (South State) (North Clark) Street and ask you what kind of a job you think they are doing. For the ones you know, please tell me whether they are very good, good, not so good, or bad.
(Chicago Welfare Department; Salvation Army; Referees, judges, and social workers at Monroe Street Court; Dawes Center; Reading Room; Catholic Charities; Pacific Garden Mission; Cook County Hospital; The new Alcoholic Treatment Center; Cook County Department of Welfare.)

93. Which political party do you like best? (None, Republicans, Democrats, No interest in politics, Other(Specify).)
A. How do you feel about the Republican Party? (Why?)
B. How do you feel about the Democratic Party? (Why?)
C. How do you feel about the Socialist Party? (Why?)

94. ASK FOR EACH ETHNIC GROUP TO WHICH THE RESPONDENT <u>DOES NOT BELONG</u>:
A. How do you feel about Negroes?
B. How do you feel about Puerto Ricans?
C. How do you feel about Indians?
D. How do you feel about Mexicans?
E. How do you feel about white people?

95. Sometimes we like to make a follow-up study to find out how the people we have interviewed are getting along. That doesn't mean that we will definitely ask you to give us another interview some day, but I would like to know how to get in touch with you if we should need to talk to you again after a few months. Would you mind giving me your social security number and the names and addresses of two relatives or close friends who might be able to tell us where you are or where you've been recently? (If you'd rather not, that's O.K.)

INTERVIEWER'S OBSERVATIONS

To be completed immediately after the interview and before another interview is undertaken.

A. CHECK LIST OF RESPONDENT'S BEHAVIOR DURING INTERVIEW:

1. ACTIVITY: AMOUNT
   a. Underactive--seldom moves, almost stuperous.
   b. Able to sit and converse quietly throughout interview.
   c. Unusually restless, but would have more relaxed periods.
   d. Acutely restless and excited.
2. SPEECH: PRODUCTION
   a. Uncommunicative--responds with only short replies to direct questioning.
   b. Enters readily into conversation in a normal manner and in a moderate tone of voice.
   c. Talks excessively. Periodic outbursts of talking.
   d. Noisily overtalkative. Sometimes shouts and yells. Hard to restrain.
3. SPEECH: COHERENCE
   a. Speaks in a coherent, relevant, and logical fashion. Conversation is logically consistent and connected by some common idea or relationship.
   b. Tends to speak in an incoherent fashion. Successive elements of his thought are frequently inconsistent or do not hang together. Conversation rambles or is irrelevant.
   c. Speech is incoherent to a high degree. It appears to have little or no associative continuity. Speech appears to be scattered, disconnected, or confused.
4. MOOD LEVEL:
   a. Exhilarated, gay, exuberant, laughing and singing. Ignores unpleasant aspects and difficulties of any situation.
   b. Euphoric, happy, persistently cheerful even under inappropriate circumstances.
   c. Neither very gay nor very blue, but appropriate to the situation.
   d. Generally sad, depressed. Cries easily.
   e. Very depressed and melancholic. Cannot be cheered.
5. AGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR:
   a. Most aggressive and combative. Tries to "pick a fight" at each query. Violent outbursts of temper.
   b. Occasionally or moderately aggressive and combative. Easily irritated and reacts with irritation or signs of poorly controlled temper.
   c. Even temper--seldom irritable. Few signs of being either aggressive or defensive about the interview.
   d. Under-agressive. Frequent self-negation, self-criticism, self-hate. Does not defend himself or his past actions, but believes he is not as good as others. Much feeling of inferiority.
   e. Extreme self-hate. Does not defend himself or actions in any way. Real and deep feelings of complete inferiority.
6. ANXIETY:
   a. Extremely anxious and worried, panicky, filled with apprehension. Anticipates disasters, death, and dangers. Symptoms of deep guilt

feelings. At some point in the interview he may wring his hands, pace the floor, strike head with hands while talking of guilt, sins, fears, problems.

b. Distinctly worried and anxious. May talk about guilt, sins, and unworthiness. May wring hands, etc., but not prolonged and uncontrolled.

c. Shows concern only as called for by circumstances.

d. Careless and unconcerned. Rarely shows uneasiness or uncertainty.

e. Nonchalant; completely unconcerned without a care as to the present or the future.

7. MANNERISTIC BEHAVIOR:

a. Exhibits bizarre, peculiar or fantastic behavior. May repeat over and over the same words, phrases, movements, gestures, or grimaces. May assume a fixed posture for long periods of time. May laugh uncontrollably. May mutter to himself a great deal. (Describe mannerisms:)

b. No unusual mannerisms apparent.

8. HALLUCINATIONS:

The person may report sensations for which there is no stimulus:

a. Seeing visions, ghosts, fairies, or other strange or supernatural sights.

b. Hearing voices, ringing, hissing, whistling or other strange sounds for which there is no stimulus.

c. Talking with supernatural or deceased persons--God, the Devil, spirits, etc.

d. Experiencing unusually good or bad odors or tastes, or strange olfactory sensation.

(Describe kind and evaluate intensity of such hallucinations:)

e. No evidence of hallucinations.

9. DELUSIONS:

The person may report misconceptions or false belief about himself, such as:

a. Believing that he is a famous, important, powerful, unusually gifted or otherwise unusual individual--with no factual evidence to support his claim.

b. That someone is trying to kill him, hurt him.

c. That society at large or a group of people are trying to harm, oppress, disgrace him.

(Describe the content of the delusion and evaluate its intensity--how firmly obsessed with it is the person.)

d. No evidence of delusions.

B. PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION OF THE RESPONDENT:

1. Build: Somewhat skinny, Average, Somewhat fat
2. Appearance: Somewhat ugly, Average, Nice-looking
3. Missing teeth: None or few missing, Several missing, No teeth
4. Unusual facial or other physical features: (Describe: Big nose, big ears, deformed nose, unusually-shaped face, big scar, birthmark, pock-marked face, etc.)

IN ANSWERING ITEMS 5-8 COMPARE RESPONDENT WITH THE AVERAGE LOWER CLASS WORKINGMAN--e.g. TRUCK DRIVER:

5. Cleanliness of clothes: Dirty, Average, Very clean
6. Condition of clothes: Torn, worn; Average; Neat, presentable
7. Condition of shoes: Worn-out, run-over; Average; Good, new
8. Cleanliness of hands, face: Dirty, neglected; Average; Clean
9. Were there evidences of recent drinking? Of hangover? (Describe:)

C. NOTES ON THE INTERVIEW:

1. How cooperative was the respondent? (Very cooperative, Somewhat cooperative, Uncooperative, Very uncooperative.)
2. What appeared to be his attitude toward being interviewed?
3. What subjects did he refuse to discuss fully or seem to be sensitive about?

4. In general, do you think he gave truthful answers or was "spinning a yarn" some of the time? What parts of the interview do you question?
5. What, in your opinion, are the most significant factors in this person's being on Skid Row?
6. Do you think he would accept help if it were given to him? What kind of help do you think would benefit him?
7. What do you think must be done for this man if he is to be rehabilitated?
8. What do you think is his attitude toward himself and the possibilities of his getting off Skid Row?
9. How would you rate the intelligence of this man? (Superior intelligence (should have gone to college); Quick, alert, intelligent; Average; Dull, borderline intelligence; Deficient--feeble minded, moronic)
10. Was this a person who seemed to have been normal and happily adjusted at one time, or does he strike you as having been maladjusted since adolescence? (Still is well-adjusted; Once was well-adjusted but not now; Probably never well-adjusted, but formerly in much better shape than now; Probably always poorly-adjusted since adolescence.)
11. Are there any other helpful insights or information you have about this respondent that may not be obvious to someone else reading the schedule? If so, please describe:

## II. INTERVIEWING PROCEDURE AND ORGANIZATION OF FIELD WORK

In this study it was possible to perform "clinical coding" and to arrive at evaluations about personality structure and other highly subjective aspects of the lives of the respondents — at least in an approximate way. This was made possible only by the very high quality of interviews that were obtained, with only minor exceptions. Credit for the success of the interviewing goes principally to Selma Monsky, head of the field department at NORC at that time. All of the pretest interviewing was done by her and the study director working as a team. By learning at first hand the mood and the context in which the work was to be performed, and after having had a substantial amount of experience at appreciating the limitations and special characteristics of the respondents, she then proceeded to devise procedures for hiring, training, and supervising a crew of interviewers that would deliver with the sensitivity desired. It is to be hoped that at some future date Miss Monsky will prepare a journal article on the procedures she followed, for it is a model that could be copied in other contexts where difficult interviews are to be taken on highly emotional topics about which there is great prejudice and disagreement — even among respondents.

Interviewers were selected and trained with extraordinary care. Miss Monsky developed a special questionnaire which applicants were asked to fill out. The attitudes and prejudices of applicants toward a variety of pertinent topics were inventoried. With this inventory and a personal interview she was able to eliminate those given to strong biases, inflexibility, and inability to be empathetic. The length of the training period covering the interview and its objectives was roughly twice as long as normally given for new studies. After interviewing rehearsal, new interviewers were introduced to the field situation one-by-one; each was asked to observe Miss Monsky or the study director conduct an interview with a homeless man. (It was found that this did not harm the interviewing situation.) This gave the new interviewer an opportunity to experience the sights and sounds and smells of Skid Row hotels, and to adjust to them, before he was responsible for working there.

Also, it gave him an opportunity to observe a homeless man at close range, to learn his mental processes, and to observe how the various questions worked. Interviewers who were too upset by the Skid Row environment to remain with the project were able to withdraw at this time without having failed.

Only a small body of interviewers who possessed the desired qualifications could be assembled for the study. At peak size, the interviewing force numbered only 14, and most of the time it fluctuated between 6 and 10. Since the interviews were lengthy and there was much waiting

around hotel lobbys for particular respondents to appear, progress was slow. It was deemed better to work slowly with high quality results than to accelerate the work by employing less able interviewers. For this reason, the interviewing consumed the entire winter and spring of 1957-58.

Miss Monsky read samples of the interviews, and coached and corrected interviewers as the work progressed. New interviewers' work was studied carefully, and if it failed to measure up to the desired completeness, the interviewer was retrained (with additional sessions of observing interviewing by others) or released.

The interviewers were instructed to write verbatim as much of the conversation as they could, and this was emphasized and re-emphasized in the training. As a result, the interview documents give a great deal of flavor of thinking and the viewpoint of the respondent. Most of the interviewers were men, although it was found that woman interviewers could work safely and effectively in the interviewing booth. In fact, men living in sample rooms not infrequently appeared and volunteered for the interview with a lady interviewer, the word having been gotten to them privately by the hotel clerks.

The average interview required 2.5 hours. It had been established in the pretest that it could be completed comfortably in about one hour and 45 minutes under average conditions. The extra time was consumed largely by unprompted comments by the man himself, the conversation being very free and often quite detailed. The longest interview lasted more than 6 hours and necessitated the purchase of a free meal to refuel the respondent.

In many instances the respondent was in very critical financial, emotional, or physical condition. In each case, his problems were brought to the attention of one of the agencies whose program was intended to help men with that particular problem.

Because of the nature of the task, interviewing assignments had to be given on a day-to-day and sometimes hourly basis. The sampling procedure was not one of strict probability sampling, but the nearest equivalent that could be devised. It began by the study director contacting the hotel owner to get permission to conduct interviews in the hotel and to get permission to contact the hotel clerk to make arrangements. He then went to the hotel and obtained from the clerk a list of the room numbers (bed numbers in dormitories); he then drew a sample, taking every 15th room number and every 10th room or bed number in missions. These listings of sample beds were then turned over to a roving field supervisor, who made daily assignments, and who was available continuously on Skid Row to assist interviewers. This roving supervisor interviewed in emergencies or when he had no other pressing work.

When interviewing work was to begin in a hotel, the roving supervisor would go to the clerk on duty, take a block of the sample numbers, and obtain the names of the persons occupying the rooms. For all sample rooms for which there was an occupant, he asked the clerk to tell him whether he recognized the occupant as a more or less permanent resident of the hotel or transient or recent arrival. The transients and recent arrivals were given top priority to be interviewed as quickly as possible; their names were turned over to an interviewer who immediately began to try to establish contact. Longer term residents were contacted later, or while waiting for transients to return to their rooms.

Rooms that were vacant but in the sample were watched for 24 hours to find out whether anyone rented them during the day. (Hotel clerks were asked to assign rooms as they normally would, without looking to see whether they were on our list to be sampled or not.) If a room initially vacant obtained an occupant, the fact was learned by a check-back later in the day and again early the next morning. Persons who checked in during the 24 hour period were treated as transients, and an interviewer was given their name with instructions to make contact as soon as possible.

Despite efforts to contact transients, it sometimes happened that a man would check in late at night and leave the hotel early the next morning, without our interviewers having a chance to approach him. In all cases where the occupant was not contacted by an interviewer, the field supervisor was empowered to substitute at random another transient who checked into the same hotel on the next or a later day. Each contact between an occupant of a sample room and an interviewer was deemed a completed sample case, the outcome of which was either a completed interview or a refusal. In this way, there were no "not at home cases"; the only reason for failure to obtain an interview was refusal. Under these sampling rules, the completion rate was 84 percent. Although this is substantially below the completion rate experienced in many nationwide sample surveys, it was deemed to be acceptable in this universe.

The apparent reasons for refusal were diverse, but probably biasing in some unknown way. Elderly nonalcoholic pensioners apparently were ashamed to be found on Skid Row, and often refused to be interviewed. Men who were seriously ill sometimes did not want to be bothered with an interview. Men who held steady jobs that required long hours or strenuous labor often were too tired and irritable to consent to an interview. Men who were hiding from the police, or who were pursuing illegal occupations or activities would obviously be afraid of betraying themselves and hence all probably refused. Although many ex-convicts were interviewed, some men who had committed serious crimes for which they had served prison sentences probably refused the interview

in order to avoid discussing their past. Men in poor mental health would tend to become apprehensive at the prospect of being interviewed and refuse. Some alcoholic derelicts were too drunk to be interviewed, although most of this group agreed to be interviewed when contacted a day or so later when they were sober. Some drunken transients, however, refused to be interviewed on first contact and moved from the hotel before they could be contacted again. Thus, it is clear that some of the refusals came from men of all drinking classifications, all ages, all work stages, etc. Although a bias very likely exists, it is not a simple one, but a net resultant of a variety of situations.

Interviewers contacted the men when they approached the hotel clerk to get their key or when they went to their room. Hotel clerks were most cooperative in signalling the interviewers when a man occupying a sample room entered the lobby.

## III. SAMPLING

An effort was made to write the present report without cluttering it with sampling paraphernalia, knowing that it would be of most interest and value to an audience many of whom have limited statistical training. Hence, tests of statistical significance have been de-emphasized throughout. Nevertheless, the claims made from the data, and the generalizations concerning factors and relationships are in accordance with good statistical practice.

The sample size of 613 cases was sufficiently large that it permitted rather free comparison of the men subclassified by drinking classification or any other variable with assurance that, wherever the sum of percentage point differences between any two distributions (taking differences of only one sign) was 15 points or more, the two distributions would be found to be significantly different at the .05 level (using the Chi-square test), where the number of categories of classification was two to eight, where the distribution of expected differences were split in such a way that distributions were 40-60 or even more deviant from 50-50, and where the number of cases in the distribution being examined was 200 or more. In view of the exploratory nature of the study, it was assumed that differences significant at the .10 level were worth mentioning as possibly meaningful relationships.

Wherever the sum of percentage point differences of one sign attained 20 or more, significance at the .05 level for a $x^2$ test between two center distributions could be presumed under almost any plausible circumstances where the expected value for each category was at least 5 cases and the total number of cases in the "actual" distribution under study was 200 or more. Where it was not evident that the particular difference under consideration was clearly significant at the .10 level, a formal test was made.

Since the sample was a weighted one, the missions having been sampled at the rate of 1 in 10 and the hotels at the rate of 1 in 15, all tabulations were run as weighted samples. In performing the tests of significance, both unweighted cases were used. In this case, the "expected" cases for the Chi-square tests were obtained from the percentage distribution of the weighted sample applied to the corresponding unweighted total number of cases of the unweighted sample. Although this involves a mild bias of overestimating the degrees of freedom, the two sampling ratios are sufficiently alike to tolerate it as an approximation.

## SOCIO-ECONOMIC INDEXES OF DETAILED OCCUPATIONS

| Occupational Codes | Occupation | Socio-Economic Index, 1950 |
|---|---|---|
| | PROFESSIONAL, TECHNICAL, AND KINDRED WORKERS | 135 |
| 000 | Accountants and auditors | 132 |
| 001 | Actors and actresses | 121 |
| 002 | Airplane pilots and navigators | 151 |
| 003 | Architects | 162 |
| 004 | Artists and art teachers | 122 |
| 005 | Athletes | 101 |
| 006 | Authors | 140 |
| 007 | Chemists | 140 |
| 008 | Chiropractors | 132 |
| 009 | Clergymen | 113 |
| 010-029 | College presidents, professors, and instructors (n.e.c.) | 145 |
| 031 | Dancers and dancing teachers | 99 |
| 032 | Dentists | 177 |
| 033 | Designers | 128 |
| 034 | Dietitians and nutritionists | 96 |
| 035 | Draftsmen | 118 |
| 036 | Editors and reporters | 142 |
| 041 | Engineers, aeronautical | 147 |
| 042 | Engineers, chemical | 154 |
| 043 | Engineers, civil | 141 |
| 044 | Engineers, electrical | 144 |
| 045 | Engineers, industrial | 141 |
| 046 | Engineers, mechanical | 142 |
| 047 | Engineers, metallurgical, and metallurgists | 145 |
| 048 | Engineers, mining | 150 |
| 049 | Engineers (n.e.c.) | 149 |
| 051 | Entertainers (n.e.c.) | 88 |
| 052 | Farm and home management advisors | 140 |
| 053 | Foresters and conservationists | 107 |
| 054 | Funeral directors and embalmers | 117 |
| 055 | Lawyers and judges | 176 |
| 056 | Librarians | 112 |
| 057 | Musicians and music teachers | 110 |
| 061-069 | Natural scientists (n.e.c.) | 141 |
| 058 | Nurses, professional | 107 |
| 059 | Nurses, student professional | 96 |
| 070 | Optometrists | 144 |
| 071 | Osteopaths | 177 |
| 072 | Personnel and labor relations workers | 142 |
| 073 | Pharmacists | 140 |
| 074 | Photographers | 105 |
| 075 | Physicians and surgeons | 184 |
| 076 | Radio operators | 122 |
| 077 | Recreation and group workers | 121 |
| 078 | Religious workers | 108 |
| 079 | Social and welfare workers, except group | 123 |
| 081-084 | Social scientists | 145 |

| Occupational Codes | Occupation | Socio-Economic Index, 1950 |
|---|---|---|
| 091 | Sports instructors and officials. . . . . | 124 |
| 092 | Surveyors . . . . . | 104 |
| 093 | Teachers (n.e.c.) . . . . . | 132 |
| 094 | Technicians, medical and dental . . . . . | 106 |
| 095 | Technicians, testing. . . . . | 110 |
| 096 | Technicians (n.e.c.). . . . . | 117 |
| 097 | Therapists and healers (n.e.c.) . . . . . | 120 |
| 098 | Veterinarians . . . . . | 142 |
| 099 | Professional, technical, and kindred workers (n.e.c.). . . . . | 123 |
| | FARMERS AND FARM MANAGERS. . . . . | 100 |
| 100 | Farmers (owners and tenants). . . . . | 100 |
| 123 | Farm managers . . . . . | 92 |
| | MANAGERS, OFFICIALS, AND PROPRIETORS, EXCEPT FARM. . . . . | 118 |
| 200 | Buyers and department heads, store. . . . . | 135 |
| 201 | Buyers and shippers, farm products. . . . . | 91 |
| 203 | Conductors, railroad. . . . . | 111 |
| 204 | Credit men. . . . . | 128 |
| 205 | Floormen and floor managers, store. . . . . | 108 |
| 210 | Inspectors, public administration . . . . . | 117 |
| 230 | Managers and superintendents, building. . . | 86 |
| 240 | Officers, pilots, pursers, and engineers, ship. . . . . | 114 |
| 250 | Officials and administrators (n.e.c.), public administration . . . . . | 122 |
| 260 | Officials, lodge, society, union, etc.. . . | 118 |
| 270 | Postmasters . . . . . | 110 |
| 280 | Purchasing agents and buyers (n.e.c.) . . . | 131 |
| 290 | Managers, officials, and proprietors (n.e.c.) (salaried) . . . . . | 130 |
| 290X | Managers, officials, and proprietors (n.e.c.) (self-employed). . . . . | 110 |
| | CLERICAL AND KINDRED WORKERS . . . . . | 102 |
| 300 | Agents (n.e.c.) . . . . . | 124 |
| 301 | Attendants and assistants, library. . . . . | 93 |
| 302 | Attendants, physicians' and dentists' offices . . . . . | 90 |
| 304 | Baggagemen, transportation. . . . . | 92 |
| 305 | Bank tellers. . . . . | 108 |
| 310 | Bookkeepers . . . . . | 108 |
| 320 | Cashiers. . . . . | 101 |
| 321 | Collectors, bill and account. . . . . | 97 |
| 322 | Dispatchers and starters, vehicle . . . . . | 102 |
| 325 | Express messengers and railway mail clerks. | 114 |
| 335 | Mail carriers . . . . . | 107 |
| 340 | Messengers and office boys. . . . . | 77 |
| 341 | Office machine operators. . . . . | 102 |
| 342 | Shipping and receiving clerks . . . . . | 92 |
| 350 | Stenographers, typists, and secretaries . . | 115 |

| Occupational Codes | Occupation | Socio-Economic Index, 1950 |
|---|---|---|
| 360 | Telegraph messengers | 67 |
| 365 | Telegraph operators | 104 |
| 370 | Telephone operators | 101 |
| 380 | Ticket, station, and express agents | 112 |
| 390 | Clerical and kindred workers (n.e.c.) | 102 |
| | SALES WORKERS | 103 |
| 400 | Advertising agents and salesmen | 126 |
| 410 | Auctioneers | 100 |
| 420 | Demonstrators | 96 |
| 430 | Hucksters and peddlers | 59 |
| 450 | Insurance agents and brokers | 123 |
| 460 | Newsboys | 52 |
| 470 | Real estate agents and brokers | 118 |
| 480 | Stock and bond salesmen | 135 |
| 490 | Salesmen and sales clerks (n.e.c.) | 103 |
| | CRAFTSMEN, FOREMEN, AND KINDRED WORKERS | 95 |
| 500 | Bakers | 88 |
| 501 | Blacksmiths | 72 |
| 502 | Bookbinders | 94 |
| 503 | Boilermakers | 99 |
| 504 | Brickmasons, stonemasons, and tile setters | 87 |
| 505 | Cabinetmakers | 91 |
| 510 | Carpenters | 81 |
| 511 | Cement and concrete finishers | 78 |
| 512 | Compositors and typesetters | 110 |
| 513 | Cranemen, derrickmen, and hoistmen | 90 |
| 514 | Decorators and window dressers | 99 |
| 515 | Electricians | 104 |
| 520 | Electrotypers and stereotypers | 117 |
| 521 | Engravers, except photoengravers | 101 |
| 522 | Excavating, grading, and road machinery operators | 91 |
| 523 | Foremen (n.e.c.) | 109 |
| 524 | Forgemen and hammermen | 88 |
| 525 | Furriers | 101 |
| 530 | Glaziers | 92 |
| 531 | Heat treaters, annealers, and temperers | 93 |
| 532 | Inspectors, scalers, and graders, log and lumber | 85 |
| 533 | Inspectors (n.e.c.) | 101 |
| 534 | Jewelers, watchmakers, goldsmiths, and silversmiths | 96 |
| 535 | Job setters, metal | 98 |
| 540 | Linemen and servicemen, telegraph, telephone, and power | 107 |
| 541 | Locomotive engineers | 113 |
| 542 | Locomotive firemen | 106 |
| 543 | Loom fixers | 77 |
| 544 | Machinists | 98 |
| 545 | Mechanics and repairmen, airplane | 108 |
| 550 | Mechanics and repairmen, automobile | 89 |

| Occupational Codes | Occupation | Socio-Economic Index, 1950 |
|---|---|---|
| 551 | Mechanics and repairmen, office machine | 99 |
| 552 | Mechanics and repairmen, radio and television | 94 |
| 553 | Mechanics and repairmen, railroad and car shop | 88 |
| 554 | Mechanics and repairmen (n.e.c.) | 93 |
| 555 | Millers, grain, flour, feed, etc. | 83 |
| 560 | Millwrights | 97 |
| 561 | Molders, metal | 80 |
| 562 | Motion picture projectionists | 102 |
| 563 | Opticians and lens grinders and polishers | 102 |
| 564 | Painters, construction and maintenance | 80 |
| 565 | Paperhangers | 65 |
| 570 | Pattern and model makers, except paper | 102 |
| 571 | Photoengravers and lithographers | 123 |
| 572 | Piano and organ tuners and repairmen | 92 |
| 573 | Plasterers | 86 |
| 574 | Plumbers and pipe fitters | 100 |
| 575 | Pressmen and plate printers, printing | 109 |
| 580 | Rollers and roll hands, metal | 89 |
| 581 | Roofers and slaters | 78 |
| 582 | Shoemakers and repairers, except factory | 70 |
| 583 | Stationary engineers | 104 |
| 584 | Stone cutters and stone carvers | 86 |
| 585 | Structural metal workers | 99 |
| 590 | Tailors and tailoresses | 79 |
| 591 | Tinsmiths, coppersmiths, and sheet metal workers | 97 |
| 592 | Tool makers, and die makers and setters | 108 |
| 593 | Upholsterers | 89 |
| 594 | Craftsmen and kindred workers (n.e.c.) | 96 |
| 595 | Members of the armed forces | 71 |
| | OPERATIVES AND KINDRED WORKERS | 83 |
| 600 | Apprentice auto mechanics | 82 |
| 601 | Apprentice bricklayers and masons | 91 |
| 602 | Apprentice carpenters | 88 |
| 603 | Apprentice electricians | 97 |
| 604 | Apprentice machinists and toolmakers | 98 |
| 605 | Apprentice mechanics, except auto | 94 |
| 610 | Apprentice plumbers and pipe fitters | 95 |
| 611 | Apprentices, building trades (n.e.c.) | 87 |
| 612 | Apprentices, metalworking trades (n.e.c.) | 93 |
| 613 | Apprentices, printing trades | 94 |
| 614 | Apprentices, other specified trades | 88 |
| 620 | Asbestos and insulation workers | 96 |
| 621 | Attendants, auto service and parking | 80 |
| 622 | Blasters and powdermen | 76 |
| 623 | Boatmen, canalmen, and lock keepers | 89 |
| 624 | Brakemen, railroad | 103 |
| 625 | Bus drivers | 94 |
| 630 | Chainmen, rodmen, and axmen, surveying | 83 |
| 631 | Conductors, bus and street railway | 98 |
| 632 | Deliverymen and routemen | 91 |
| 633 | Dressmakers and seamstresses, except factory | 79 |
| 634 | Dyers | 78 |

| Occupational Codes | Occupation | Socio-Economic Index, 1950 |
|---|---|---|
| 635 | Filers, grinders, and polishers, metal. . . | 90 |
| 640 | Fruit, nut, and vegetable graders and packers, except factory . . . . . | 65 |
| 641 | Furnacemen, smeltermen, and pourers . . . . | 84 |
| 642 | Heaters, metal. . . . . | 92 |
| 643 | Laundry and dry cleaning operatives . . . . | 77 |
| 644 | Meat cutters, except slaughter and packing house . . . . . | 94 |
| 645 | Milliners . . . . . | 103 |
| 650 | Mine operatives and laborers. . . . . | 73 |
| 660 | Motormen, mine, factory, logging camp, etc. | 73 |
| 661 | Motormen, street, subway, and elevated railway . . . . . | 98 |
| 662 | Oilers and greasers, except auto. . . . . | 82 |
| 670 | Painters, except construction and maintenance . . . . . | 85 |
| 671 | Photographic process workers. . . . . | 98 |
| 672 | Power station operators . . . . . | 108 |
| 673 | Sailors and deck hands. . . . . | 81 |
| 674 | Sawyers . . . . . | 58 |
| 675 | Spinners, textile . . . . . | 70 |
| 680 | Stationary firemen. . . . . | 80 |
| 681 | Switchmen, railroad . . . . . | 103 |
| 682 | Taxicab drivers and chauffeurs. . . . . | 80 |
| 683 | Truck and tractor drivers . . . . . | 81 |
| 684 | Weavers, textile. . . . . | 74 |
| 685 | Welders and flame-cutters . . . . . | 95 |
| 690 | Operatives and kindred workers (n.e.c.) . . | 84 |
| | Manufacturing . . . . . | 84 |
| | Non-manufacturing . . . . . | 82 |
| | Construction. . . . . | 80 |
| | Railroads . . . . . | 82 |
| | Transportation, except railroad . . . . | 89 |
| | Telecommunication . . . . . | 88 |
| | Wholesale and retail trade. . . . . | 79 |
| | Business and repair services. . . . . | 83 |
| | Personal services . . . . . | 72 |
| | Public administration . . . . . | 88 |
| | All other industries. . . . . | 78 |
| | PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD WORKERS. . . . . | 57 |
| 700 | Housekeepers, private household . . . . . | 69 |
| 710 | Laundresses, private household. . . . . | 62 |
| 720 | Private household workers (n.e.c.). . . . . | 57 |
| | SERVICE WORKERS, EXCEPT PRIVATE HOUSEHOLD. . . . . | 77 |
| 730 | Attendants, hospital and other institution. | 80 |
| 731 | Attendants, professional and personal service (n.e.c.). . . . . | 83 |
| 732 | Attendants, recreation and amusement. . . . | 63 |
| 740 | Barbers, beauticians, and manicurists . . . | 80 |
| 750 | Bartenders. . . . . | 87 |
| 751 | Bootblacks. . . . . | 47 |

| Occupational Codes | Occupation | Socio-Economic Index, 1950 |
|---|---|---|
| 752 | Boarding and lodging house keepers. . . . . | 80 |
| 753 | Charwomen and cleaners. . . . . | 64 |
| 754 | Cooks, except private household . . . . . | 77 |
| 760 | Counter and fountain workers. . . . . | 76 |
| 761 | Elevator operators. . . . . | 74 |
| 762 | Firemen, fire protection. . . . . | 102 |
| 763 | Guards, watchmen, and doorkeepers . . . . . | 78 |
| 764 | Housekeepers and stewards, except private household . . . . . | 93 |
| 770 | Janitors and sextons. . . . . | 66 |
| 771 | Marshals and constables . . . . . | 85 |
| 772 | Midwives. . . . . | 78 |
| 773 | Policemen and detectives. . . . . | 103 |
| 780 | Porters . . . . . | 64 |
| 781 | Practical nurses. . . . . | 74 |
| 782 | Sheriffs and bailiffs . . . . . | 97 |
| 783 | Ushers, recreation and amusement. . . . . | 63 |
| 784 | Waiters and waitresses. . . . . | 76 |
| 785 | Watchmen (crossing) and bridge tenders. . . . | 81 |
| 790 | Service workers, except private household (n.e.c.). . . . . | 64 |
| | FARM LABORERS AND FOREMEN. . . . . | 51 |
| 810 | Farm foremen. . . . . | 81 |
| 820 | Farm laborers, wage workers . . . . . | 51 |
| 830 | Farm laborers, unpaid family workers. . . . . | 50 |
| 840 | Farm service laborers, self-employed. . . . . | 81 |
| | LABORERS, EXCEPT FARM AND MINE . . . . . | 66 |
| 910 | Fishermen and oystermen . . . . . | 61 |
| 920 | Garage laborers and car washers and greasers. | 67 |
| 930 | Gardeners, except farm, and groundskeepers. . | 64 |
| 940 | Longshoremen and stevedores . . . . . | 72 |
| 950 | Lumbermen, raftsmen, and woodchoppers . . . . | 51 |
| 960 | Teamsters . . . . . | 61 |
| 970 | Laborers (n.e.c.) . . . . . | 68 |
| | Manufacturing . . . . . | 71 |
| | Non-manufacturing . . . . . | 66 |
| | Construction. . . . . | 65 |
| | Railroads and express service . . . . . | 68 |
| | Transportation. . . . . | 72 |
| | Telecommunication and utilities . . . . . | 68 |
| | Wholesale and retail trade. . . . . | 69 |
| | Business and repair services. . . . . | 67 |
| | Personal services . . . . . | 44 |
| | Public administration . . . . . | 74 |
| | All other industries. . . . . | 55 |
| VVV | OCCUPATION NOT REPORTED. . . . . | XX |

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